

CURRICULUM

Ex LIBRIS  
UNIVERSITATIS  
ALBERTAENSIS




High Level

BOOK BINDERY LTD.

10372 - 60 Ave., Edmonton

"THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF  
CRAFTSMANSHIP"

3 24 9 20  
3 3 20



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2019 with funding from  
University of Alberta Libraries

<https://archive.org/details/allaboutpets00bian>







# ALL ABOUT PETS



THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

NEW YORK • CHICAGO

DALLAS • ATLANTA • SAN FRANCISCO

LONDON • MANILA

BRETT-MACMILLAN LTD.

TORONTO







© Underwood & Underwood

*A friend who will never fail you.*



# ALL ABOUT PETS

BY

*Margery Williams Bianco*

DECORATIONS BY

*Grace Gilkison*



*New York*

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1957

COPYRIGHT, 1929  
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

---

All rights reserved, including the  
right of reproduction in whole  
or in part in any form

---

Set up and electrotyped.

Seventeenth Printing, 1957

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

UNIVERSITY  
ALBERTA LIBRARY



TO  
"THE COMMON PEOPLE"  
WHO HAS HELPED THROUGHOUT WITH HIS  
ENCOURAGEMENT AND COMPANIONSHIP  
IF NOT ADVICE

LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY  
OF ALBERTA



# CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. ABOUT PETS IN GENERAL . . . . .	I
II. MICE . . . . .	11
<i>White mice and others—How to build a mouse cage—Care and feeding—Bringing up the family—Mouse acrobats—Waltzing mice—Some wild mice.</i>	
III. RATS . . . . .	23
<i>The tame rat—Character of rats—Tricks and habits—Rat friends—The brigand rats.</i>	
IV. DOGS . . . . .	31
<i>Your own dog—Feeding and care—Bathing—Sleeping quarters—Bringing up a puppy—Training—What to avoid.</i>	
V. CATS . . . . .	49
<i>Cats and their character—How cats talk—City cats and country cats—Education—What cats like—Feeding—Sickness and accidents—How to handle a cat.</i>	
VI. RABBITS . . . . .	69
<i>How to treat a rabbit—Housing—Care of a rabbit</i>	

## CONTENTS

*hutch—Handling and feeding—Peculiarities of rabbits—Rabbits as companions—Outdoor rabbits.*

- |       |  |     |
|-------|--|-----|
| VII.  | <p>GUINEA PIGS . . . . .</p> <p><i>Varieties—Care and feeding—Housing—Baby guinea pigs—Habits and ways.</i></p>  | 81  |
| VIII. | <p>BIRDS . . . . .</p> <p><i>Care of cage birds—Canaries—Choice and care of cages—Proper feeding—Outdoor birds—Bird guests—Some simple bird houses.</i></p>                | 91  |
| IX.   | <p>THE AQUARIUM . . . . .</p> <p><i>Choosing an aquarium—What to keep in it—Goldfish and tropical fishes—Tadpoles and newts.</i></p>                                       | 110 |
| X.    | <p>LAND-AND-WATER PETS . . . . .</p> <p><i>Building a terrarium—Tame toads—Tree toads and frogs—Feeding small reptiles—Snakes—Land and water tortoises—Alligators.</i></p> | 119 |



# ILLUSTRATIONS

FRIEND WHO WILL NEVER FAIL YOU . . . . .	<i>frontispiece</i>
	FACING PAGE
THE RAT IS LIKE A BIG BROTHER OF THE MOUSE . . . . .	30
AMELA BIANCO'S DOG . . . . .	31
AMESE CATS . . . . .	56
ERSIANS ARE ESSENTIALLY HOUSE PETS . . . . .	57
CATS LIKE TO BE COMFORTABLE . . . . .	64
CAT GOES FISHING . . . . .	65
RABBITS HAVE DEFINITE PERSONALITIES . . . . .	70
RABBITS SEEM TO KNOW THEY ARE FUNNY . . . . .	71
THE GUINEA PIGS AT THE TOP ARE PERUVIAN, THE OTHERS	
ABYSSINIAN . . . . .	82
ABY GUINEA PIGS . . . . .	83
OUNG CROWS MAKE AMUSING PETS . . . . .	102
TWO TAME CROWS . . . . .	103
TWO YOUNG ROBINS . . . . .	108
IT IS DIFFICULT TO TAME A WILD MOUSE . . . . .	109
OUR TANK MUST HAVE STRAIGHT SIDES . . . . .	110
ISH MUST HAVE WATER PLANTS . . . . .	111
DADS WILL SOON SETTLE DOWN . . . . .	124
ABY ALLIGATORS MAKE AMUSING PETS . . . . .	125
BIT OF BRANCH FOR THEM TO SIT ON . . . . .	126
THE FLOOR OF THE AQUARIUM . . . . .	127
TORTOISES ARE BEST AS GARDEN PETS . . . . .	128
THIS TORTOISE WILL ENJOY A PIECE OF BANANA . . . . .	129

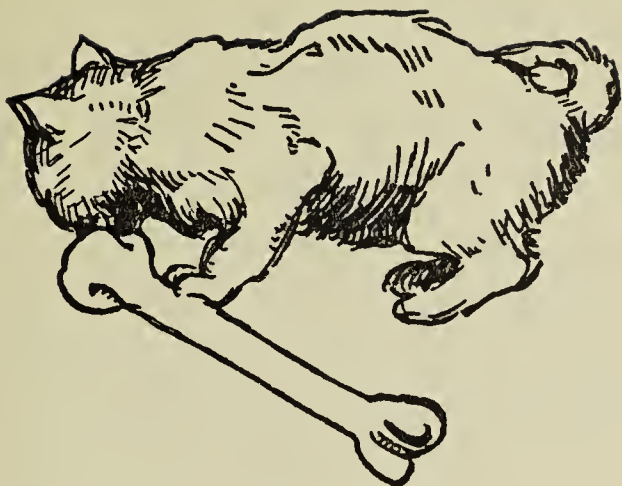
Due to the critical labor situation in manufacturing plants, illustrations will be found in the back of book.



**ALL ABOUT PETS**







## CHAPTER I

### ABOUT PETS IN GENERAL

One of my earliest recollections is of being invited to spend the afternoon with two strange ladies of whom I felt very much in awe. It was all right at home but going out to tea, and alone, was a different matter, and I well remember the wave of shyness and misery that descended on me with the closing of the parlor door. Left alone for a few moments, I happened to catch sight of a glass case on a table near the window, and of something moving inside it. The something turned out to be a frog, small and green and very much at home among the ferns and pebbles of his little garden. At sight of that frog all misgivings vanished; ladies, even strange elderly ladies, who kept a pet frog in their parlor were clearly people of in-

telligence and understanding, the sort of people there was not the slightest need to feel shy of, and within two minutes of my hostesses' return we were already fast friends. That day I learned for the first time how very easy it is to come to an understanding with anyone who likes the same things you like, and I still think it particularly true of people who like to keep pet animals, even more than of those who like to keep postage stamps or rare books or old china.

One of my favorite characters in fiction has always been the medical gentleman who kept white mice in his piano, a most sensible way of using up all that empty space. Though I never happened to own a piano, I have kept them in a discarded dolls' house, which is almost as good, and after a varied experience of keeping all sorts of creatures in all sorts of improvised living quarters, including a hedgehog in the shoe closet, I can sympathize with anyone who wants to keep animals anywhere, provided they are comfortable.

So much has already been said and written about pets that it would seem as if there were very little more that one could add. The boy or the girl who is interested in some particular kind of creature, from a great Dane to a goldfish, will have no difficulty at all in finding quite an extensive literature on the subject. The trouble, perhaps, will be not in finding too little, but too much, written.

This sounds a queer thing to say. What I mean is, there is a sort of generous conspiracy to assume that if you like to keep one rabbit you must like to keep dozens, and that you can't want one dog without wanting a lot of dogs. So that the owner of just one solitary puppy or guinea pig is sometimes left feeling rather bewildered and unimportant. It is as though some kind-hearted person who suddenly decided to adopt a baby could only find advice about running a full-sized orphan asylum, or as if you or I, thinking how nice it would be to bake a small cake for supper, should turn to one of these old-fashioned cook-books that begin so grandly: "Take thirty eggs, and of the whites, fifteen. . . ."

This book, then, is going to be more or less about pets as individuals, which, after all, is the way to get most enjoyment from them. For if you come to consider it, fifty guinea pigs don't necessarily give fifty times as much pleasure as one guinea pig, though they may give a bit more trouble; whereas, if you know how to take care of one guinea pig properly, then you can always care for the fifty all right later on, if you should get ambitious.

The first thing to learn in keeping any sort of pet is personal responsibility. Don't undertake the care of any animal unless you are really sure that you want it, and are willing to devote all the time and trouble that may be necessary to keep it under proper conditions. People who

acquire a pet on the whim of the moment, through sudden fancy or just because it happens to be offered to them, are apt to tire of it just as readily. Carelessly kept animals are a burden to their owners and to everyone around; they give pleasure to no one and are far better dispensed with. If you neglect your garden for a day or two because you happen to be interested in something else the worst that will be likely to happen to it is weeds, but you can't lay pets aside and take them up again according to mood. Remember that it is your business to look after your own pets, and no one else's, and don't take it for granted that some more thoughtful member of the household will feed them and clean their cages if you forget to do so; sooner or later there'll come a day when no one will, and then it will be only yourself to blame. Some animals are not very particular about their meal times, or can at least make their wants known. Mice, guinea pigs and small birds cannot and will, starve to death within twenty-four hours, and with no warning—an unpleasant trick but none the less true.

Your responsibility should extend not only to feeding but to looking after them generally. Remember that what is everybody's business is nobody's business. Small animals kept out of doors need extra protection at night; bird cages should not be left even temporarily in unsafe positions, and you can't go away and leave a young puppy out



a kitten running about the lawn within reach of a road where traffic passes without the risk of accidents happening. So make it a rule at all times to *know* that your pets not only are fed and clean, but are secure from any possible accident, so that you can go off and leave them, with a free mind. And if you have to ask anyone else to look after them in your absence, do so definitely, and choose someone responsible, who won't be likely to find it a trouble.

An important thing to learn, from the very beginning, is how to handle an animal. Some people will instinctively pick it up or hold it in the right way, others have to be taught. I shall have more to say about handling certain particular animals later, but there are one or two things that apply to handling any small living creature.

Let any pet get used to you before attempting to pick it up at all. This can be done by stroking and coaxing, letting it used to the touch and smell of your hand. When you do pick it up, be careful not to chivy or frighten it beforehand, and don't make any sudden grasp. Pick it up quietly, avoiding any struggle, if possible, with your right hand covering its body and controlling its movement at the shoulders, and slipping your left hand quickly underneath. Never squeeze the body; all small animals are delicate and easily injured in that way. Hold it so that its weight is fully and comfortably supported from *underneath*. Animals are terrified by any feeling of insecurity,

or of being suspended in the air. They want to feel that they are being supported somehow on their own feet. With anything as small as a mouse or a canary, if you consider your partially closed hand as a sort of cage, you will very quickly learn how to hold them in it quite loosely and comfortably but guarded against any sudden movement of escape, and with the head free.

When you put an animal down, do so just as deliberately and carefully. Never drop it, or put it down hurriedly or carelessly, or let it jump violently from your hand. Even if it is trying to peck or bite you, which it may very well do in fright, don't be startled into dropping it suddenly. Nothing frightens an animal more, or will go further to undo all your patience and work in trying to tame it.

Never try to restrain any animal unnecessarily by force, or make it do anything it does not want to, by trying to overcome its resistance. If it does not yield to coaxing and persuasion, let it alone and try again some other time. You cannot tame any animal by force. Avoid sudden movements that will flurry or startle it. Almost any creature, gently treated, will gradually become accustomed to handling and learn to have confidence in you. Animals that are not naturally wild are often so timid that when you first get them it may take considerable patience to overcome their suspicion. Very few animals are naturally vicious but the gentlest of them may scratch or bite out of nervous-



ess. They are afraid of being handled and choose this means of warning you.

Try to have your pets with you as much as possible; let them accustomed to your voice and touch. Allow them as much freedom as you can, within safety. An animal that is always kept shut up becomes dull and stupid; your real pleasure in any pet only begins when you can treat it more or less as a companion. Every animal has its own personality, and I have never found even two mice or two rabbits that were exactly alike in their ways, though they might share certain tricks and peculiarities. There is a sort of general character common to all animals of a certain kind or breed and there is also the particular character of the individual, which you will find out little by little and in which its real charm and attraction consists, and this is always capable of development in the right hands.

Have you never wondered why in some households the dog or the cat, to take the most frequent example, seems invariably intelligent, amusing, and full of understanding, while in others it is dull, uninteresting, or even stupid and unfriendly? This isn't a matter of chance. Simply, one has been treated from the first as a personality, has been encouraged, talked to, taught manners, and regarded, in a way, as a member of the family, while the other may have been adequately fed and housed, but with that the owner's care and interest has ended.

Talk to your pets, whatever they may be—that is, any that are outside an aquarium. They like it and learn to expect it. They will quite soon find their own ways of replying, and then the conversation need no longer be one-sided.

There is a mistaken idea, chiefly among persons who dislike bother and responsibility, that an animal “knows what is best for itself,” and in any emergency can be relied upon to follow what we call its own “instinct.” This is only partially true. A wild animal does know a great deal and is generally quite capable of taking care of itself. Domestic animals, and those born or kept for any length of time in captivity, lose this sense to a great degree, or never fully develop it. In danger, they may become confused and show very little idea of self-protection, or they may frequently be in situations where they cannot take care of themselves even if they want to. They lose their sense of discrimination through having no occasion to exercise it, and will readily eat poisonous plants or substances that an animal in the wild state would not touch. An animal that is sick has no more intelligence in curing itself, beyond the instinct of keeping quiet, than has a sick person, and needs just as much care. Nature is by no means a universal physician, though she will coöperate very successfully in many cases, and a cat or other animal can heal its own wounds by licking them just so far as you can heal

your own cut or bruised finger by licking it, and no more.

Your care, therefore, should extend not only to the proper feeding and housing of your pet but also to safeguarding it sufficiently. The greater number of fatalities and minor accidents among pets arise, not through deliberate carelessness, but through "not thinking." There are many cases in which an animal will think for itself, but there are others in which you must learn to think for it, and to think beforehand. Some things are learned more easily through another's experience than through your own. A good rule is to leave as little as possible to chance.

Though both you and I may be—I hope are—in perfect agreement as to where anything *may* be kept, if necessity arises, other people are sometimes harder to persuade, so the best thing to do before you acquire any sort of pet is to provide for its proper housing. Ready-made cages, except for birds, rarely come up to requirement; it is more satisfactory to build your own, and have them just the way you want them. Many people object to keeping caged animals at all. It is true that one would rather have any pet completely at liberty, but with small animals it isn't always possible. For one thing, they may do damage and, for another, the strain of always having to wonder where the pet rat or guinea pig is before you venture to sit down or lean back anywhere is more than the average household would stand for very long. With a pet animal, the cage is actually

## ALL ABOUT PETS

a measure of protection and should be regarded only as such. Given reasonable freedom whenever possible, an animal will very quickly recognize that its own cage, hutch or kennel is a place where it can be sure of privacy and protection. For the rest, it should be as roomy as possible, fully weathertight and secure, and perfectly clean.





## CHAPTER II

### MICE

If I speak of mice first it is not so much with the idea of beginning at the smallest and working up, as with the thought they were the very first pets I ever kept; for that

reason perhaps I have a particularly warm feeling for them. Even nowadays it is a struggle to drag myself past any pet shop window where mice are for sale. There is really something very irresistible about a mouse—its smallness, to begin with, and its delicacy; the dainty way it sits up and holds its food or washes its face; and the continuous joyous twinkling of its whiskers. Rats and mice are more persistent washers even than are cats; they never seem quite satisfied with their own cleanliness.

There are two objections sometimes raised against pet mice, usually by people who have never kept them: first that they have an odor; second, that they will attract other mice to the house. Neither of these need worry you. A mouse, properly kept, is no more unpleasant than a canary, rather less. As for house mice, far from being overfriendly with tame mice, they will even attack them if they get a chance.

Between the white and the colored mice there is very little to choose; both are charming. I rather prefer the latter for their variety of color and marking. You find them black, grey, yellow, plum-color and chocolate-brown, both piebald and in self-coloring. The first pair I ever had were yellow-and-white, and black-and-white, and their babies were of all colors and shades. Where mice are bred for exhibition, great importance is given to their markings and color, and a perfect mouse is often quite costly. Pure white



## M I C E

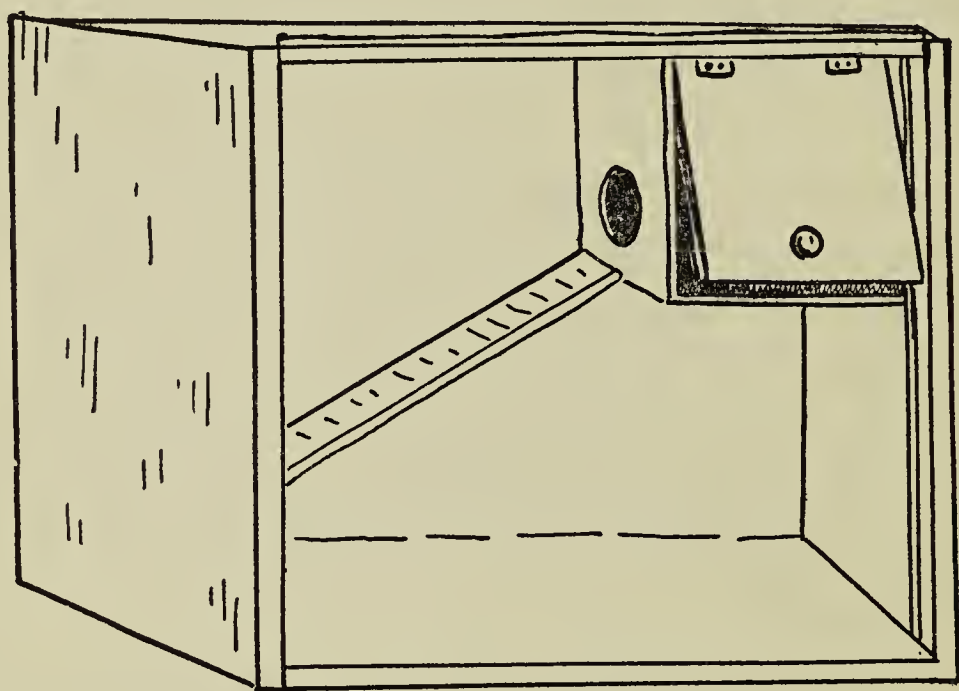
nice as a rule have ruby-colored eyes and the others black. A good mouse should be either the same color all over with no white, or else very evenly marked. White ones should be of a pure white, not yellowish, and with short glossy fur.

The cages usually sold for mice are too small. Bird cages are not very good because they are too unprotected, there is no provision for the sleeping box, and the wires are often far enough apart to allow a small mouse to slip out between them. A cage for two mice should be about the size of the ordinary tin cracker box you see in grocery stores; in fact, I have seen a very good cage made of just such a box, leaving the glass front, which opens on a hinge, and with the tin cut away over the top and wire netting fixed there instead. This is not very difficult to do. The sides being of tin, the sleeping box cannot be built in, but stands on supports inside.

A wooden box of about the same size, however, will do as well; you must choose one that is perfectly smooth inside and quite sound.

Begin by taking out one side of the box, which will be the top. This is to be replaced by wire netting; the half-inch square mesh is best to use and is the easiest to cut and handle. Use a pair of heavy scissors or tin snips. You will also need some half-inch flat molding, and some thin wire brads. Out of the wood from the side that was taken out

you can build the sleeping box, which should be about five inches square and fastened in one corner near the top, with a little sloping ladder leading up to it and a two-inch square hole for the mice to go in and out. This arrangement leaves the floor space free, and gives the mice more exercise in running up and down. The sleeping box must also have



*A Cage for Mice*

a door the full width, opening on the outside of the cage for cleaning it out. This can be hinged at the top, and have a little hook or button on the outside to secure it.

The front of the cage should be of glass. With brads nail two upright strips of your narrow molding just inside the front of the box on each side, leaving a groove between

just wide enough for the glass front to slide up and down easily. The top netting can be fastened in place with strips of the same molding. See that there are no projecting nail points or splinters inside the cage when you have finished. For the floor, it is best to have a piece of thin zinc cut, half an inch wider each way than the bottom of the cage, so that you can turn the edge up a quarter-inch all round, making a flat tray that can be taken out and washed when you clean the cage.

The ladder—a narrow slip of wood—may be attached to the top with a couple of small hooks and screw-eyes. Never use the wood from cigar boxes in building any part of the cage; mice are liable to be poisoned by gnawing it. Do not use any paint or varnish on the inside, for the same reason.

A mouse cage must be cleaned regularly and kept clean. Use plenty of sawdust on the floor, that can be swept out and changed as necessary. Sprinkle sawdust in the sleeping box and for bedding use soft hay, or very fine wood shavings and cotton wool. Never use grass, or anything that is at all damp. The sleeping box need not be cleaned more than twice a week, and when you clean it, shake out the bedding and put back as much of it as is unsoiled, with a little fresh, clean sawdust. Mice hate having their beds disturbed. They like to bite up their bedding and fix it just as they want it, and they get very provoked at having to

do their work all over again, so make it as easy for them as you can. A cross mouse getting its bedroom back into order again, pushing and tugging, is absurdly like a cross housewife over her spring cleaning.

Both rats and mice sleep a great deal in the daytime and dislike being continually waked up or disturbed to see how they are getting on.

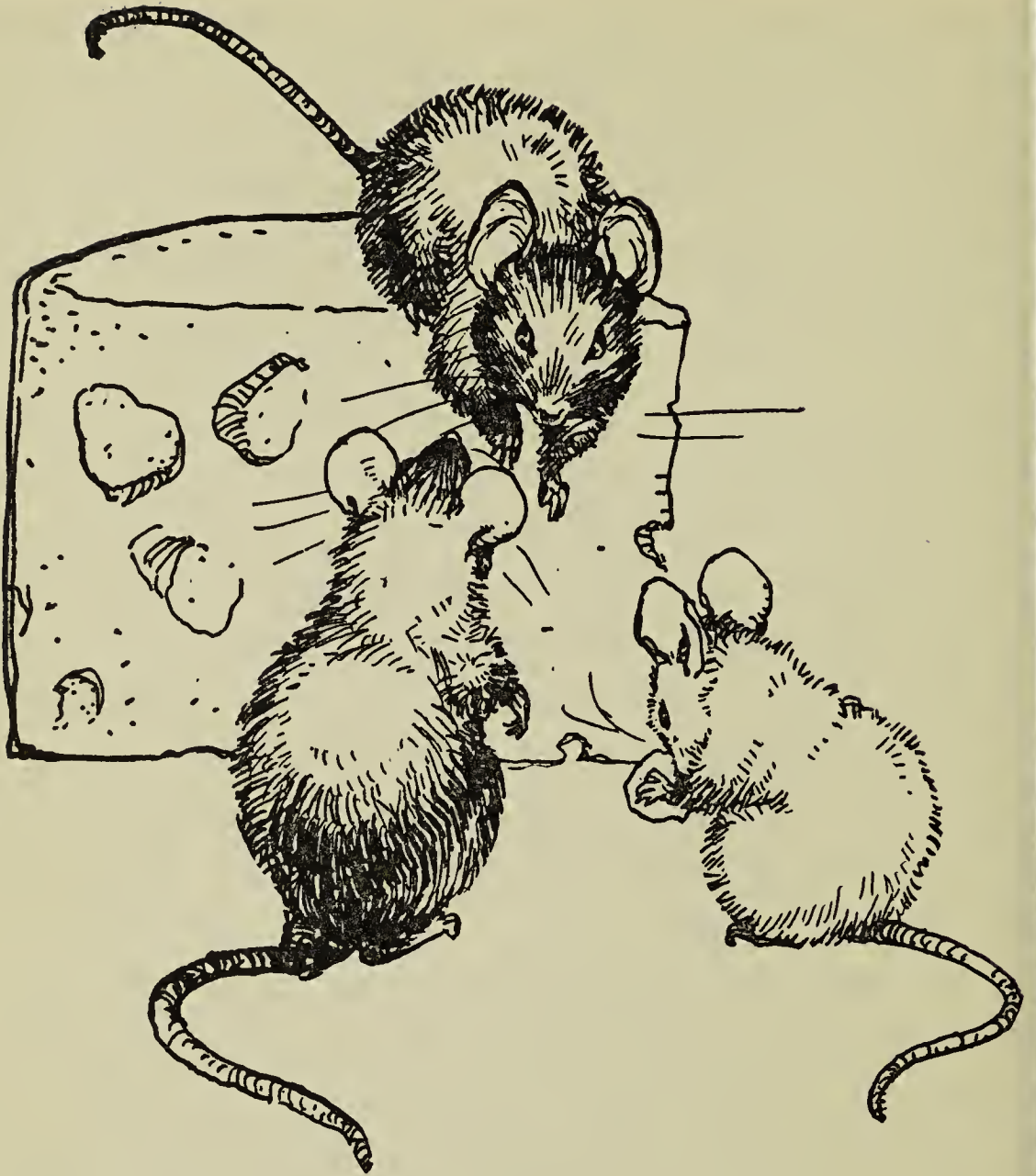
Mice thrive best on dry grain of all sorts—corn, oats, wheat and plain canary seed, or even dry rolled oats for a change; a very little bread soaked in milk or water once a day, with occasionally a leaf of lettuce, a piece of raw carrot or a slice of sweet apple. They like nuts, which should be cracked for them. Tame mice have not such strong teeth as wild ones and a broken tooth may cause trouble. Vary their food as much as possible. Never give sugar, cheese, or meat of any kind, and do not overfeed them. Plain, dry grain may be kept always in the cage; they are not likely to overeat on this. If they are getting too fat and lazy, cut down their rations and give more green food. They must have clean drinking water always, and the food vessels should be of glass or china and washed every day. Mice will eat almost anything but they are healthiest when kept on plain food, with not too much cracker, bread, or cake.

Be sure to keep the cage where there is no danger from strange cats. It should be in a fairly cool, ventilated



place in summer; in winter, safe from draughts or sudden drops of temperature. Mice succumb very quickly to extremes of cold or neglect in feeding. But if you should find a tragedy some morning don't give up hope at once; quick action will often save a chilled or starving mouse even when it seems stone-cold and lifeless. The first thing is to get it thoroughly warm, when, after a few minutes, it will probably begin to stir and revive; then give it a drop of warm milk on the tip of your finger, keep it warm and feed it by degrees. Out of four "dead" mice—and they certainly looked dead—I succeeded in restoring three once by hastily buttoning them inside my sweater, and half an hour later they seemed none the worse. The same treatment will work with small birds in a similar case. Mice cannot go long without food, and they are so tiny that there is very little warmth in their own bodies with which to resist either cold or hunger.

Kept clean, and on plain food, mice are not very liable to disease. They sometimes get colds, due usually to damp or draughts. The mouse sits about looking listless and wretched, sneezes, and its little feet are cold and clammy to the touch—always a sign of something wrong. Look first to the sleeping box; see that the bedding is perfectly dry and that there is plenty of it, and stand the cage where it will be warm and protected. Give a little warm bread and milk, and if the mouse seems very shivery you can wrap



it in a bit of soft heated flannel. Damp flooring is a frequent cause of colds.

Baby mice, as soon as they begin to run about, are very charming. A mouse is a very fussy little mother. About

e time the babies are to be born, you will probably see  
 e mother terribly busy dragging out bedding and stuffing  
 between the cage bars, or building up a sort of tunnel  
 th it near the sleeping box. This is to keep everything dark  
 d cozy for them. Don't disturb the sleeping box, but give  
 r plenty of loose bedding and cotton in the cage to use as  
 e likes. Feed her extra bread and milk. Mice are born quite  
 lpless and naked, but after about ten days they will have  
 eir proper coat of fur and begin to open their eyes. During  
 is time, on no account touch the sleeping box, and disturb  
 e cage as little as possible, only to put in food and water.  
 ven after the little ones can run, the mother is still very  
 ict with them. You will see her pushing them back into  
 e nest with her paws or even dragging them back by one  
 r if they try to get out too soon. As soon as they begin  
 eat for themselves, they may be fed like the big mice,  
 ly with a little more soft food in the beginning.

Mice are quite docile and will readily learn easy tricks,  
 ke using a small see-saw, climbing a pole or walking a  
 etched rope, or even sitting up with a broom straw  
 their hands. It is a good plan to keep an empty cotton  
 ool in the cage for them to sharpen their teeth on, and  
 save the woodwork. They are naturally busy, and must  
 ve something to do. A revolving wheel is good, but it  
 ould be suspended from above; with side supports, there



is always danger of a mouse getting its head caught in trying to enter while the wheel is turning.

There is a breed of mice, said to originate in Japan, called "waltzing mice." They are white mice with black or dark-grey markings, and their peculiarity is that they do really waltz, spinning round and round like a little flying ball of fur or sometimes revolving one round another. They seem to enjoy this and will keep it up till you feel dizzy watching them. They waltz after eating, waltz when they are hungry, and waltz furiously always just after their cage is tidied up. The babies, almost as soon as they can stand on their feet, will begin to spin round just like their parents. Those that I kept had only two young ones at a time, unlike the ordinary mouse that will have six or eight, but I don't know whether this is the rule with all of them. Apart from the waltzing trick, they seemed to be more amusing in their ways even than the usual white or spotted mice. They are also incessant squeakers and chatterers.

If you find that your young mice, as they grow up, begin to fight among themselves, you will have to watch them, notice the trouble makers and separate them from the others. They can be given away or kept in a different cage and peace maintained.

My dolls'-house mice, that I mentioned earlier, lived in the attic, where they had free run, returning always to the

lls'-house to sleep. This isn't a very good plan though, they will sooner or later run half-wild, and you are apt to lose them through accident. I spoke of house mice attacking tame ones. There can be fierce battles and bloodshed, even through the bars of a cage, so it is best to keep our own mice where there is no danger of the others. We once picked up in the woods a very pretty baby field mouse, with white paws and stomach, apparently lost and too small to run. I brought it home to feed and shelter it for a few days. Having no cage handy, it twice climbed out of the box where I put it and was found next morning on the floor in a corner, badly bitten and mauled. The last time it took a week for its leg to heal, and, as by then it was fairly grown, we put it out in the barn, leaving food and water by the box. It stayed about till the food was eaten and then evidently set off on its travels, for we never saw it again.

Wild mice have been tamed, but it is difficult to do so; they are so intensely nervous that handling or confinement is very hard on them. House mice will sometimes get very familiar. In a studio where we once lived, there was a fat elderly mouse who used to come out and warm himself every evening before the gas fire. He would sit there for hours, perfectly contented. We called him "Grandpa." One evening poor Grandpa had some sort of seizure; we suddenly saw him lying flat on his back and when I picked

him up he seemed dead. After a moment however he opened his eyes, gave one desperate leap from my hand and disappeared. We never saw him again after that.

There is a kind of field mouse that will play possum, letting itself be picked up and rolled about without stirring, perfectly limp. When left alone, however, it will after a moment open its eyes, look round cautiously, and trot away.

The English dormouse—really a member of the squirrel family—is familiar here only to readers of “Alice in Wonderland.” It is about the size of an ordinary mouse, reddish brown, with a feathery tail, like a chipmunk’s, which it carries curled over its back. Dormice seem to adapt themselves to captivity fairly easily and become quite tame. They hibernate in winter, and any frosty morning you are likely to find your dormouse curled into a tight, cold little ball, his tail wrapped round his nose; thus he will stay, for a day or a week, as may be, till the weather turns warm again. They live on nuts, grain, and fruit, and will always lay up a large store in their sleeping box, which they detect having disturbed, and I don’t blame them. Much as I loved my dormice as a child, I should be glad to hear that there is a law against their capture and sale, for it is a pity that these very beautiful little creatures, which are none too plentiful, should risk extinction.

A dormouse that I once knew, during the illness of its owner refused food, pined away and finally died.

## CHAPTER III

### RATS

The rat is like a big brother of the mouse, less quiet and docile, more independent, and far more intelligent, and a most interesting pet to keep. If you buy one, buy a young one, not one full-grown. Rats come both white and albino, like mice. They need naturally more space than mice, and a stronger cage, but their feeding and general care are much the same. Where they differ considerably is in character. A rat will not learn tricks as readily as will a mouse; he has less patience, and is more interested in trying out his own ideas than in obeying yours.

Rats are highly nervous creatures, easily startled by noise or sudden movement. Their sense of hearing is very acute. They are most inquisitive and, like cats and rabbits, concerned with curiosity about new objects or surroundings. A rat shows great affection and will usually become definitely attached to its owner, but however tame it may be with you; be careful how you let others handle it. It is apt to resent being touched or picked up by strangers, particularly in its owner's absence.



One tame rat I had, which had always been quite gentle, was left in a friend's care for a few days while I was away. The first day the rat was all right and quite friendly; the second day it began to mope, refused food, and when my friend opened the cage door it flew at her and bit her. I returned to find a bandaged thumb, apologies for a dirty cage, and a very sulky and bedraggled rat; but as soon as I touched it the rat was all right again and allowed my friend to stroke and handle it as before.

Another thing to remember is never to poke, or allow others to poke a finger between the cage bars. For some reason, most animals—rats, parrots, and rabbits, especially—seem to consider this a direct invitation to bite or nibble, and can seldom resist the temptation. Many a tame rat has been unjustly banished as savage when it was really nothing of the kind, and the fault lay with its owner. I would not consider a rat a safe pet for a very young child, for this reason; but I have handled many and never been bitten by one myself.

Never put a rat into a cage with birds; it is their natural enemy and the sight of it will terrify them even if they are not attacked.

This same white rat—called "Topaz" from the color of his eyes—would go for walks in the garden or through the woods, following like a dog. Like a dog, too, he would make little side excursions of his own, always rushing back

the least sound or alarm. He was very fond of playing hide-and-seek. Indoors he showed, like most pet rats, a great fondness for picking up small objects like pencils or loops of thread, and carrying them off into his cage for playthings. He had a quite a collection of these treasures, pounced upon always when he thought no one was looking, and he got very annoyed if you tried to take one away, pacing his feet and tugging at it like a little terrier. A favorite way of teasing him was to tie a pencil to a string and then leave it lying on the table, like the old April fool trick. He was very curious about any new object, sniffing it all over and finally trying it with his teeth to see what it was made of.

Rats, unlike some animals, show great confidence in their human friends. They like to snuggle in your pocket or sit on your shoulder, and if alarmed will usually run to you for protection instead of running away.

They are great washers, and keep their fur in exquisite order. In fact, they dislike dirt and disorder of any kind, and you may often see your pet rat not only rearranging his bed but scuffing up the sawdust with his paws and tidying the cage according to his own ideas. A funny thing happened with a white rat I once had in Paris. There was a coach house on the ground floor, and mice occasionally came up from it. One day when I lifted the pillow on my bed, I found a very small house mouse curled up under it.

fast asleep. He seemed rather stupid and bewildered, young mice sometimes do, and I picked him up and put him in the rat's cage to see what they would say to one another. The rat sniffed at him, looked him over disapprovingly, and then with a sudden air of decision pushed him into a corner with his paws and began to wash him vigorously all over. Evidently he had only been used to seeing mice that were snow-white like himself and thought that was the proper color; this was a very dirty baby indeed and something must certainly be done about it. So he washed and he washed, and every time the little mouse tried to escape, the rat would push him sternly back, hold him still with his paw and begin again. The brown wouldn't come off, naturally, and I could see the poor thing getting more and more puzzled and discouraged, till at last the baby mouse, very damp by now and rather indignant, managed to slip between his paws and escape through the bars of the cage.

A great many tales are told of the intelligence of wild rats. I know an old manor house in Wales of which a curious story was told me. A lady who had stayed there said that on the first night of her visit her hostess told her: "Don't be alarmed if you hear a great noise in the walls about midnight; it's only the rats going down to the brook to drink. They always go at twelve o'clock :



come back at five minutes past, but that is the only time you will hear them."

Rather uneasy, my friend went to bed, turned the light down, and lay there listening. Sure enough, at exactly twelve o'clock, she heard all at once a great scurrying and scampering through the thick stone walls and under the door—just like the sound the townspeople must have heard when the Pied Piper blew on his pipe. The rats were going down to drink! Then there was a silence, and in exactly five minutes the scampering began again; the rats were coming back. Every night during her visit, about on the stroke of midnight, my friend heard the same performance, but at no other time was a rat seen or heard in the house. Rats like these are at least orderly neighbors, keeping themselves and giving no trouble, but they are not always so considerate. I can well understand the noise those Welsh rats must have made galloping through the old stone walls ever since one summer spent on an island in Maine. The house we camped in had not been used for many years, and had no other house very near it. Towards the end of the summer, the beach rats, of which there were a number among the rocks on the shore, must have found their own supplies getting scarce, or perhaps wanted to lay up a stock for the winter, and discovered that we had plenty of food, for they began creeping in at night. At last they climbed through the pantry window and stole;

nothing was eaten there but things mysteriously disappeared, and in quantity; we would miss crackers, half a loaf of bread, a package of bacon. I put it down to squirrels, and we closed the pantry window at night. Still they came, grew bolder, and there was no mistaking who our "boarders" were. It was getting late in the fall, and, as the nights were cold, I had moved my bed down to a room with a fireplace, opening off the big kitchen. The rats must have watched outside for the light to be extinguished, for no sooner was the last lamp blown out than the invasion began. There a squeal and a scuffle, a patter of feet over the floor, then strange thumps from the pantry. Loaves of bread were thrown down from the top shelf, boxes overturned, packages torn open, and a general pandemonium reigned for a couple of hours.

We examined the house, and decided that the only way they could possibly get in was through a round disused pipe hole below the sink. Evidently, this hole was used to pass the supplies out, for we found crumbs and fragments near it and once an unexplained ham bone on the floor, that had been too large to push or drag through. So we nailed a piece of strong tin over the pipe hole, and waited.

That night, as soon as the lights were turned out, we heard the usual skirmish outside, followed this time by a moment's silence. Then came the grating of sharp teeth against tin, the sound of small bodies flinging themselves

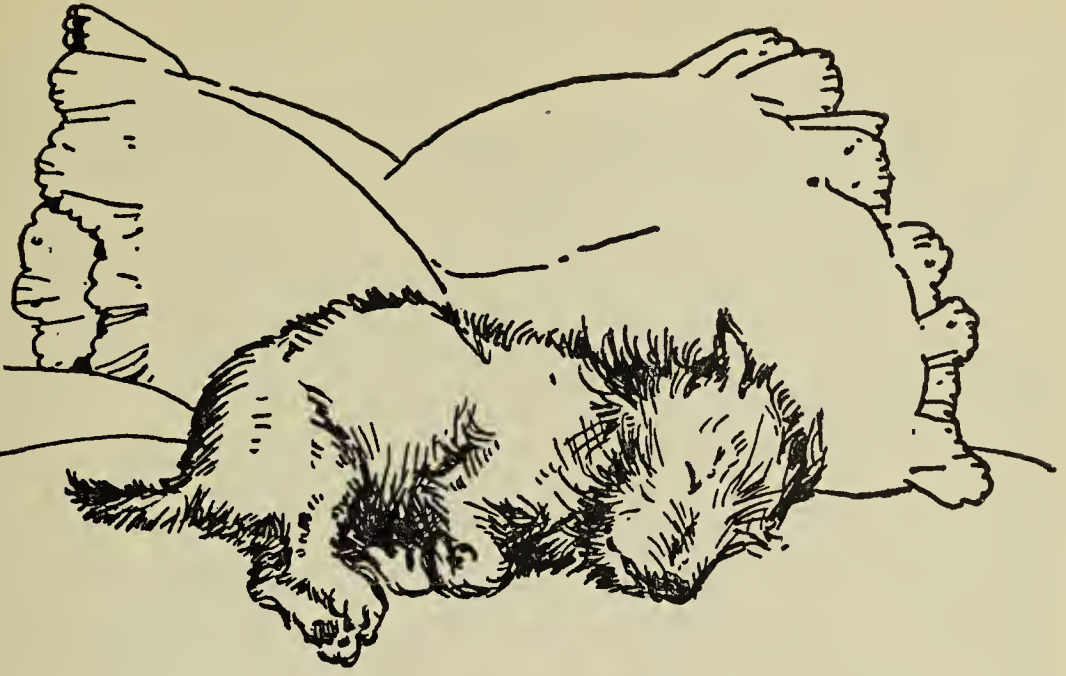
angrily against the wall, and a furious chorus of squeaking and chattering. Silence again; they had withdrawn to hold a council of war. This was followed by a fresh assault, with positive shrieks of rage, after which they fell to galloping round and round the house, trying, it seemed, every door and window, for I could even hear them scratching on the window ledge just behind my head. Their little feet thudded on the frozen ground, and every once in a while they would stop to attack the tin with their teeth once more, squealing with annoyance. I have never been afraid of rats, but listening to them that night, hearing how angry they were and what names they were calling us in rat language, I couldn't help feeling it might fare badly with us if a door suddenly gave way and they did get in. After three nights, however, they gave it up as a dead job and we heard no more of them. I did remember to throw out all the stale bread and scraps before locking the doors, so perhaps that helped to pacify them.

In another house where I spent a summer, there was one solitary rat, evidently the last of his family, who lived somewhere in the attic and whose habit it was to go downstairs every night and warm his toes—as I imagined—by the kitchen stove after the rest of the household were in bed, for we would hear, about eleven o'clock at night, a very slow and measured thump—thump—going down the black staircase. It was a perplexing sound, not quite heavy

enough for a human footfall but quite distinct, and with pauses between bumps. One night I decided to take a flashlight and see what it was. At the foot of the stairs, I waited. The queer sounds drew nearer, and presently I saw the rat coming slowly down. On each step he would pause, peer over the edge, and then very cautiously let himself down—thump—on to the step below. It took him quite a while to get to the bottom of the flight and he was so intent on his own progress that he never saw me till he reached the last step of all and I turned the flashlight full on him. An elderly rat, not very big but growing grey and very fat, he blinked at me solemnly out of his beady eyes, twitched his whiskers and waddled—he was too feeble and infirm to run—with great dignity down the entry and in at the kitchen door.

Probably he thought I had brought the flashlight just to help him on his way.





## CHAPTER IV

### DOGS

There is no joy quite like that of owning a dog or puppy for the first time. The words "my dog" have a world of meaning. Naturally he is going to be not only the best-looking but the wisest and most intelligent dog that ever lived. And so he should be, but it will depend very much on yourself. There is no animal that reflects its master's character and disposition so closely as does a dog, and a short acquaintance with almost any dog will tell you more about its owner than you might suspect. You will learn not only whether he—or she—is good-tempered and friendly, kind to animals, and considerate of other people; but



also whether he is orderly in habit, consistent, a person to be relied upon; or impatient, haphazard, and easily influenced one way or another.

That little Scottie for instance, curled in a corner, quiet but watchful, is just as eager to continue his promised walk as a dog can be; it's pretty hard for a little dog taken outdoors on a bright spring morning to have to stop on the way while his mistress visits a friend; but all the same he is patient about it, because he knows perfectly well that he is not going to be forgotten or left behind, and that, meanwhile, there is nothing whatever to be gained by whining and fussing and carrying on. If you move your chair suddenly he does not start and shrink, because he has never received a blow or push in his life and such a thing would only amaze him; he just moves politely out of your way. Once out of doors, he may act like a little cyclone, but he knows what behavior is expected of him in the house.

That other small terrier, on the contrary, is continually fidgeting and worrying; he is a pest at meal times, and cannot see anyone eat so much as a cracker without whining for it himself. He knows that if he keeps on long enough he can tease his master into giving way to him just for peace's sake, but at the same time he is wary, ready to jump back and cringe, for he is just as likely to get an impatient push or slap as a caress, and he can never be quite sure

which it will be. Yes, dogs can certainly tell you a great deal, and while it is well to take pride in your own dog's clean shining coat and good appearance, it means still more to feel justly proud of his manners.

A dog's training cannot begin too early, and for that reason it is better to start with a puppy than a grown dog. He should be at least ten weeks old; three months is better.

As to the kind of dog you get, that is a matter of personal choice, though it takes some resolution to refuse a gift of a puppy which, however attractive, will not grow up into the kind of dog you want. When you get a dog you usually expect to keep it, so it is worth while giving a little thought to the choice. The larger breeds, like Airedales, collies and police dogs, require more exercise than many people are willing or able to give them, and should be ruled out if you live in town. They also require a great deal of care in feeding, if they are to grow up healthy, and a large dry yard to run in when they cannot have the freedom of fields and garden. A puppy that is kept in a small space without room to romp or play about will grow weakly and liable to disease. A small dog needs exercise but can get it in less space. So unless you live in the country together you must choose your dog very much by size.

Do not be tempted into buying a puppy from any way-side kennels or "pet shop" which you do not know or of which you have no direct guarantee; it is better to go to a

reliable breeder on whom you can really depend, and he has not got exactly the dog you want he will get it for you, or give you the right address. There are, of course, many small kennel owners throughout the countryside who are quite dependable but there are also very many others who rely for their custom upon passing tourists and whose stock often consists of sick and weakly puppies, and sometimes stolen dogs as well, which they hope to dispose of as soon as possible. A puppy bought in this way is nearly always a disappointment, and such dealers should not be encouraged.

A puppy needs three meals a day, and not too much at one time: a bowl of milk with stale bread or cereal in the morning; a good meal of cooked meat, broth, and vegetables at midday; and puppy biscuit at night, given dry. Older dogs need only two meals—one main meal of meat and vegetables, with some biscuit soaked in the broth, and dry biscuit at night. With an outdoor dog it is best to give the chief meal in the evening, but a healthy dog is very regular in his habits and so if he sleeps indoors the midday meal system is best, as the food is then digested before nightfall. A dog that eats a good supper and is then shut up indoors for six or eight hours cannot be expected to be clean in the house, and as a well-trained dog will often suffer rather than misbehave indoors, early feeding will save trouble. This is important to remember, for dogs are



very often blamed for what is not their own fault; if a dog, after six or seven months of age, is still troublesome in this respect alteration of the feeding hour will often put things right.

Dry biscuit is best for the evening meal, and this can be left down for him; he will eat it only if he is really hungry.

A dog needs meat regularly. You can give him table-scrap if there are sufficient, or else scraps bought from the butcher, but in any case perfectly fresh and without much fat. What many butchers sell for "dog meat" is not fit for any animal's use, but your meat market will generally save you clean trimmings and large bones, if you order them regularly. Cheap Hamburg steak, so-called, is very nourishing for small dogs, and should be very lightly cooked. The meat should be mixed with broth and any green vegetables that may be left over. Cabbage is excellent, and almost any vegetable except potatoes. A little freshly chopped raw meat, twice a week, will keep your dog in good condition; and if a dog is weakly or run down, or has any skin irritation, plain raw meat with green vegetables is the best tonic and diet for him. Any pickled, highly seasoned, or salted food is bad for dogs and should never be given to them. Avoid, also, too much starch in the shape of bread or cake, or much sweet food. Gingersnaps are a better dainty than sugar or candy, which will upset

a dog's stomach. Both dogs and cats enjoy occasional sardines, in which the oil is of benefit. It is a good plan to give your dog a tablespoonful of olive oil or mineral oil once a week on his food. Be very careful about bones; never allow him fish or poultry bones of any kind. Chicken bones splinter and are very dangerous. It is best to remove any small bones that a dog is likely to chew or swallow, especially if they have been chopped, and allow him only large ones that he can gnaw without risk.

Never feed a dog, or especially a puppy, when he is overexcited, or just after taking violent exercise.

A very good guide as to amount of food is one ounce per pound of dog's weight; that is, a dog weighing twenty pounds should have twenty ounces, or about a pound and a quarter, of solid food daily. This does not include broth or other liquid.

Your dog should have his own bowl of drinking water, kept freshly filled and in the same spot, where he can always find it, and his own plate for food, or rather two, to ensure regular washing. It is not a pleasant idea to let a dog feed off the family crockery. The plate should be removed as soon as he has finished, and the dog's owner should be responsible for the washing of his dishes and the preparation of his food.

Regular grooming is more necessary for a dog than bathing. If he is groomed every day he will not need a bath



ftener than once a fortnight, or once in three weeks in winter. Use a fairly stiff brush and a comb—not metal—with largish, smooth teeth. Comb gently but thoroughly, so as to remove all dust and particularly any loose hair, and finish with the brush. Most dogs love being groomed and will stand perfectly still for it, though they frequently hate being bathed. One can't blame them, seeing the method often followed, which is to chase and corner the dog (by this time already terrified at the prospect of something unpleasant about to happen), dump him, protesting, into a tub, soap him vigorously and then souse him under the water to struggle out as best he may.

Don't frighten your dog beforehand. Have the tub ready filled with water a little more than lukewarm and only up to his chest in depth. Put him into it quietly and coax him and talk to him till he stands still. Then with your hand or a dipper you can begin putting the water over him gently, a little at a time, till he is wet, lather and rub him thoroughly, using some plain bath soap. Most of the so-called "dog soaps" are too strong for a dog's skin, which is very sensitive. Take care not to get water into his eyes or ears. Then *lift* him out, let him have a shake, and rub him down well with towels. In cold weather, never let a dog go out for several hours after his bath, and never bathe him just after a meal. A very good plan with a nervous dog is to use a bit of rubber hose attached to the faucet and

run the water over him gently, keeping the hose close to his body. It is the splashing, more than anything else, that they dislike. Soothe, but never scold him while being bathed, or he will think it is a punishment.

Never throw or force a dog into cold water for the first time, but persuade him gradually. Otherwise he may get such a fright that he will never after go in of his own accord.

As a rule the more out-of-door life a dog leads, the healthier he is.

Every dog needs regular exercise, and it should be part of your care to take him for a walk every day. He should not be allowed to follow a bicycle or car. As a rule the more a dog is outdoors, in good weather, the healthier he is. It is never wise, however, to leave a dog loose out of doors at night; he should be shut in a shed or outhouse unless you keep him indoors. Even the best behaved dogs are apt to stray off alone or with other night wanderers, and you never know what mischief or annoyance your pet may be causing to neighbors while you sleep. In the country, especially, dogs that never leave their own premises in the daytime are incorrigible night prowlers. I have often exchanged greetings with some dignified watch dog on his doorstep, whose polite stare and tailwag would never betray that he had been surprised the night before rummaging over our back porch or digging up a favorite rosebush, and

much embarrassed at being recognized from an upper window.

Only the very hardiest dogs are fitted to sleep the year round in an outdoor kennel, and then it must be properly built and sheathed, thoroughly tight and draughtproof, and raised several inches from the ground on a proper foundation. It should have the door at one side, not at the end, and must stand in a sheltered spot, not facing north or where it will be exposed to cold winds, or rain beating in, and it must be deep enough to give the dog complete shelter when inside. Kennels made from barrels or boxes are useless. Straw is the best bedding, and it must be frequently changed, otherwise a warm blanket or rug will do. Short-haired dogs cannot stand the same amount of cold as those with a thick, heavy coat, like collies or Newfoundlands, and should not be made to sleep outdoors in winter. If you are going to keep your dog out of doors, he must be kept outside altogether, not allowed to spend the day or evening indoors in a warm room and then be turned out into the cold late at night. If he spends his day in the house he should sleep in the house.

A young puppy cannot be expected to sleep outside alone on chilly evenings. If a puppy howls at night, there is always some good cause for it. A young dog has not the same sense as an older one in making himself comfortable, and especially if he has been petted and played with during



the day he resents, and rightly, being left lonely all night. If you are training a puppy to sleep out of doors, begin in the mild weather; see that he is well protected and has sufficient covering, and it is a good plan to give him a run last thing and then shut him in the kennel, so that he cannot get out. A wire-mesh door is easily fitted and can be removed later.

A house dog should be given his own bed from the first and taught to sleep on it. A low box or basket will do, or even a flat cushion, but it must stand always in the same spot, somewhere free from draught or disturbance; a corner of your own room is the best place. It will take some patience at first, to teach him that this is his own bed and that he is expected to stay there, but he must be firmly carried back to it, time and again, until he does learn. If you let him have an old jacket or sweater of your own to lie on he will be more contented.

Training a puppy calls for a great deal of patience, and also self-control. You must begin when he is quite small, though you will probably see no results for some time. You cannot expect a puppy to be really obedient, clean, or housebroken before he is six months old, but this does not mean that your training during that time is wasted.

Regularity is of first importance. A puppy should be fed at certain hours and always in the same place. Never allow anyone to give him scraps at the table, and arrange

feeding times so that he will not associate the family meal time with his own. It is better to feed him just before, rather than after, your own meal. Then, if he teases, he should be shut out of the room entirely until he can learn to lie quietly at a distance from the table until dinner is over.

Every morning and evening, as well as several times during the day, put him outside for a run, and let him understand that this is for a definite purpose and not just for amusement. Each time he is dirty in the house carry him outside immediately and leave him there for a few minutes. When he misbehaves, correct him at once, but only by scolding; never shout and never strike him. Whipping is useless. A blow only frightens a dog and confuses his mind, so that he is more likely to offend next time just from fright. Remember that a dog is always naturally anxious to please. His great fear is of increasing your displeasure. Your task is to make clear to him what he should do and what he should not, and this can be best done by lecturing. A whipped dog will always grow up deceitful and unmanageable. A dog remembers a blow for a long time, but it is hard for him to understand the cause; the result is simply to terrify him and make it still harder for him to understand what you want. Praise when he behaves well will have much better effect.

Never confuse a puppy with unnecessary orders. Give him as few commands as possible, but impress upon him



that he must obey them. Choose a time when he is quiet, and never try to correct him or give him orders when he is excited with playing. Nor must you correct him for a thing one time and on another occasion allow him to do it.

The more quietly a puppy lives the better. Too much



handling and petting is bad. The right way to pick a puppy up is by the loose skin at the back of the neck. Never lift him by his front legs, and never on any account stretch them outwards; by doing so you can very easily strain his heart muscles and small puppies have even been killed in this way.

Puppies enjoy playing so much that it is always a temptation to encourage them, but too much may be bad for the puppy. When he shows overexcitement and refuses to lie down and keep quiet, shut him in a room by himself till he calms down. Most dogs enjoy a ball or plaything of their own, even an old slipper that they can chew or worry, and will get a great deal of exercise in this way. While cutting their second teeth, especially, they need something to bite on. A ball of wood or solid rubber is best, but it should be so big that the puppy cannot get it entirely into his mouth, or you may have trouble. Never let a puppy play with any small object that he can swallow, and don't let him get hold of anything like string, sponge, or old corks. If he does get anything of this kind in his mouth, don't try to drag it away, or his instinct will be to swallow it at once. Take hold of his head from behind and force him gently to open his jaws and shake it out. Puppies are apt to pick up and eat almost anything they come across, and this must be guarded against. They even lap paint, creosote, and other poisonous substances that an older dog would have the sense not to touch.

It is best not to attempt to treat any case of illness without advice. When a dog is sick, his coat becomes dull and staring. He may be feverish, with running at the eyes and nose, or his nose and ears may feel cold and clammy. Usually he will refuse food, act listlessly, and altogether un-

like his usual self. In any case, have a veterinary's advice as soon as possible. Any serious illness requires very careful nursing, which cannot always be given at home.

Distemper comes only from infection, and there is no need for your puppy ever to catch it. For this reason, it is wise to keep him away from other dogs as much as possible, and never allow him, when on the street, to go nosing round corners or in gutters where other dogs have passed. After he is six months old he will be less liable to take infection. Distemper needs very skilled care, as it is liable to lead to other illnesses.

Fits are usually due to internal disorders, or may be brought on by overexcitement or, most frequently, by dragging a puppy about for walks on a string, especially in the sun. If your puppy suddenly begins to yelp and struggle and possibly foam at the mouth, don't be afraid of him. Pick him right up at once, soothe him as much as you can, hold him till the fit is over and put a handkerchief soaked in cold water to the back of his head. This is better than dashing cold water over him, which is too much of a shock. Keep him perfectly quiet till he is well recovered and then take him to a veterinary who will be able to tell you the cause of the fit and what to do for him. The reason for picking a puppy up at once is that when the fit passes it leaves him terrified and confused, and his first impulse is to run blindly until he drops from exhaustion, which



he must not be allowed to do. A fit is not an illness in itself; it is a symptom of some other trouble, which must be treated.

Canker in the ear is usually caused by getting water in the ear, or by exposure. A dog with canker carries his head low, shaking his ears frequently rather than scratching them. Canker must be properly treated and taken in time. Never try to syringe a dog's ear, or drop anything into it.

Accidents often occur from a dog's being tied in an unsafe position, as near an open window, or anywhere where he can get his chain tangled up and so choke himself. If you need at any time to leave your dog chained to his kennel, see that the chain is long enough to reach well over the top of the kennel and back to the ground. A better arrangement, if you have no fenced yard, is a stout wire stretched from your doorpost to some tree, or post, with a loose ring on it to which the dog's chain can be attached, thus giving him freedom to run up and down. A dog should never be kept chained for long and it is bad to tie a young dog up at all. It is better, if necessary, to shut him in a room or a shed, leaving the window open at the top, never at the bottom.

Puppies should never be taken for long walks or dragged on a leash, but as your dog grows older it is well to accustom him to the leash, little by little. In this way he will learn that when you take him out on the street he is expected

to keep close to you and not run off out of calling distance. Coax, but do not scold, him; when he tries to pull ahead, check him each time, talking the while, until he learns to walk quietly. For his own safety, accustom him to keep to the sidewalk or edge of the road, never the middle, where he is likely to get run over. No state road or thoroughfare is safe for unleashed dogs nowadays with high-speed traffic, but they can be taught to avoid danger to some extent. Dogs are, unfortunately, very stupid about traffic much more so than cats. They are less cautious by nature, act on impulse and are easily confused. Dogs will by no means always get out of the way of a moving vehicle; instead, they seem to take it for granted that the car will either stop or get out of their way; hence the frequent accidents.

A naturally vicious dog is very rare. A puppy, however, will occasionally snap and even bite; in fact, he is more likely to do so than a grown dog simply because he has not yet acquired sense. Usually, a scolding is sufficient, but make it a serious one, so that he is thoroughly ashamed of himself. If it occurs a second time, correct with a good slap, as well as the scolding; slap him where nature provided, never on the head. Show him that he has hurt you and that it is a serious matter. But consider also, on the other hand, how far it may have been your own fault for teasing him or getting him accustomed to playing too roughly.

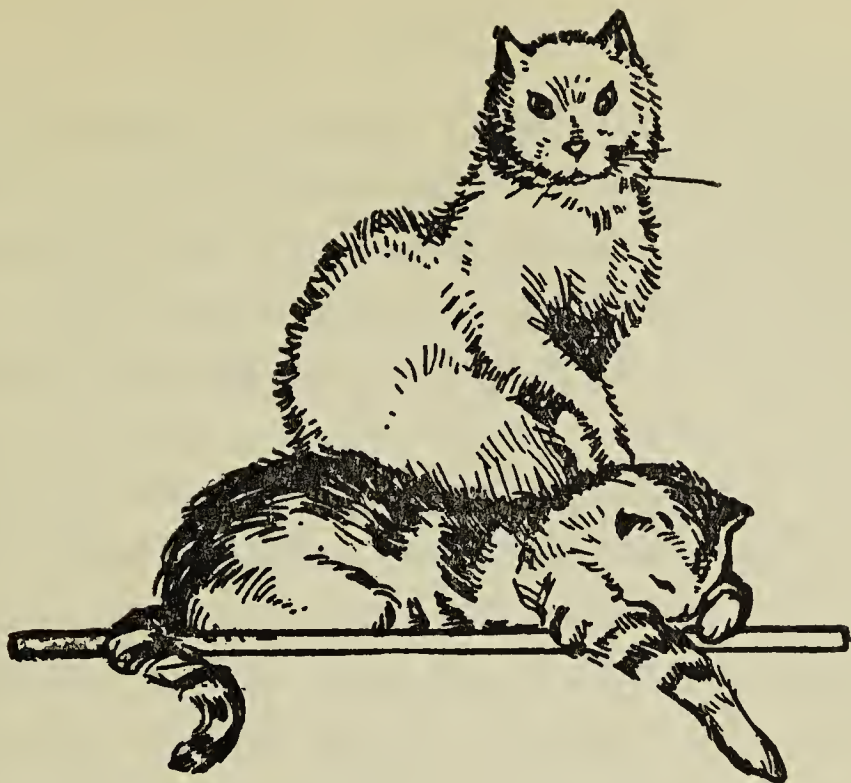


dog is most apt to snap when he is badly frightened, or in self-defense, or if he is teased or interfered with over his food.

Usually, even a puppy is conscious, as soon as he has snapped at someone, that he has done something very wrong, and will be quite repentant about it. Dogs altogether have a very keen sense of wrongdoing, and will betray themselves at once by their manner if they have been up to mischief. Caxton, our English bulldog, never quite outgrew his puppyhood temptation to suck the corners of sofa cushions, but he always scolded himself afterwards by growling. Being two years old before he ever saw baby chickens, he unintentionally killed two just by following them round and patting them with his big paw to see what they were. After that he would turn his head away and hide his eyes resolutely rather than look at a chicken and be tempted again. Benjy, a neighboring terrier, had a still keener conscience. One day a pet guinea pig was left unguarded on the lawn for a moment and Benjy, passing by, gave way to impulse and killed it. I was not at home at the time. Benjy and I had always been good friends and had never had occasion to scold him for anything. A few days later I met Benjy on the street and, although nothing had been said about the guinea pig, as soon as he saw me coming he turned away deliberately and crossed the road, and no calling or whistling would induce him to

so much as turn his head in my direction. He never came near the house again, and for weeks after would avoid me, with every sign of embarrassment.

Treat your dog as a reasonable being, and he will respond. Do not expect too much from him at first. Have him with you as much as possible, and make a habit of talking to him; in this way he will come to understand the tone of your voice, what you want of him, and how he is expected to behave. Never let him think he can trick you into overlooking a fault, but let your scolding be prompt and brief, and once it is over let it be over. Above all try never to lose your temper with him. If at five or six months of age he has learned to come at your call, lie down when and where he is told, and show, if not completely good behavior at least some real effort towards it, he is well on the way to becoming a well-trained dog, and you will begin to find the reward of your care and patience in the companionship of a friend who will never fail you, and whose trust and affection will only increase with the years.



## CHAPTER V

### CATS

You will find as a rule that the people who tell you they do not care for cats are those who either have never kept them, or have never troubled really to understand them. It is true that they are not so easy to understand as dogs. They are not so eager for your approval; they like to go their own way and often seem quite indifferent to either praise or blame. If you talk about a dog to his face he will become very self-conscious and vain, or else ashamed and rejected, according to your tone, whereas a cat will remain

quite unmoved by anything you may say. But cats' indifference is only on the surface; they are every bit as capable of affection as dogs are, and once they attach themselves to anyone their devotion is very persistent. They are very understanding, sensitive to your own moods, and peculiarly intelligent.

A cat is essentially a free animal. In his comings and goings, his likes and dislikes, he expects perfect liberty. He will give very freely, but he cannot be forced to anything against his will. A cat is about the only animal I know with whom you can argue, and even quarrel, on equal ground. Sometimes he will see your point of view and sometimes he will not. A cat even enjoys an argument. Sometimes arguing will succeed where force would be quite useless—in fact with a cat it usually is. They are extremely proud and very sensitive to ridicule. A cat resents being made to show off before company and usually dreads appearing absurd in any way. Our big black-and-white cat known as "the Common People," was one evening in the room when some visitors called, one of whom was very anxious to have him appear at his best. She said: "Oh, do get People's catnip mouse; he's so amusing when he plays with it."

The mouse was produced, but, instead of pouncing on it as usual, People threw me one indignant look, walked over, gave the mouse an angry bat with his paw that sent



at flying into the fireplace, and then marched out, not to return for several hours. I have seen the same cat turn round, when someone laughed at him for missing a fly that he was jumping for, and give the laugher a deliberate box on the ears, and one of my earliest recollections, and the most humiliating, is of having my own ears boxed in just the same way, when I was three years old, by a very dignified tabby cat in a grocery store.

This sense of personal pride is very marked in cats, and you have probably seen your own cat, many times, abandon some project on which he was engaged just because he was conscious of being watched.

They are very jealous of their own rights, but as a rule will be quite friendly with other animals living in the same house, and have been known to form very strong friendships of this kind, even with birds. "Cat and dog" is a byword for disagreement, but I have known many cats that get on quite well with dogs, and one little cat in particular that, although not brought up with dogs, far prefers them to other cats and will go up to meet any strange dog, purring and friendly. She evidently considers them rather helpless creatures in some ways, for she is never happier than when holding some dog with one paw either side of his head and washing his face energetically with her little pink tongue, patting him sternly if he tries to move away; and, oddly enough, the dogs don't seem to mind, though

they may look rather foolish. A white collie who was guest for some weeks got terribly on little Zinnia's mind. She would spend hours trying to get his long, coarse hair into what she considered proper order, and, as the collie was very big and she very small, nearly getting tangled up herself in the process.

Cats are fearless not only in defense of their kittens but often in defense of other cats as well. A little black-and-white cat, Happy, who was usually rather timid, once saw a companion cornered by a strange sheep dog and sprang down at once from her own position of safety, landing on the dog's back and clinging to him so fiercely with her claws that she succeeded in driving him away. There are many instances of cats bringing home stray companions to share their own dinner. A cat I knew once in London used regularly to go off and fetch a friend when his dinner looked more plentiful than usual, and this, as I learned from the other cat's owner, was a return invitation for meals which he had himself received. Two cats living in the same house will often divide the care of looking after a family of kittens, and I heard of a year-old tomcat who regularly stood guard over some small kittens when the mother was out, washing them, keeping them warm, and even carrying them back to their basket if they tried to crawl away.

Cats have very keen sight and hearing. Your cat will

recognize you at a much greater distance than will a dog. He will distinguish the step of each member of the family, and will rouse from sleep and be at the door waiting for you before you even put your hand on the latch. A cat makes an excellent watch dog; he will investigate every sound in the house at night, and is always on the alert.

Perhaps you have noticed that cats have not only a language of their own, but also a particular tone of voice which they use only in addressing human beings, except in the case of a mother cat talking to her kittens. If you speak to a cat it will always answer you in that soft almost noiseless voice which is neither a mew nor a purr, and which keeps it entirely for conversation. When I said just now that a cat argues, I meant that he uses exactly this voice, in varied intonations, to express his opinions; and with a little practice it is fairly easy to understand. My cat uses this voice to draw attention to any unopened parcel about the house, concerning which he is, like all cats, intensely curious; to explain why he wants a certain door or cupboard unlatched for him; to wake one up in the morning, or to say good-night at bedtime; and also to tell me about anything interesting in the ice chest, like fish or cold chicken, which he knows about but thinks for some reason that I do not. This latter argument is the one that usually lasts longest and becomes most heated, and it can only be ended by really pretending to lose one's patience with him.



Cats often show attachment to certain places, and they will usually remember any place where they have once stayed, even after a long absence. I have never had any difficulty in moving a cat from one place to another, or in getting it accustomed to new surroundings. Our family cats have always traveled quite willingly. When you bring a cat for the first time to a new house arrange, if possible, so that it arrives there hungry, and can have a good meal the first thing. Close doors and windows and let it explore its new surroundings at leisure. Cats are intensely curious about a strange house, and until they have satisfied themselves by thoroughly examining it, which may take some time, they will not settle down. Let the cat see your own personal belongings, or any already familiar objects, about, so that it knows you intend to stay there. It is better to give a cat freedom by degrees, though keeping an eye on it, than to frighten it by shutting it up.

Usually a cat's first act, after examining the indoor premises, is to mark down and test one or more safe strongholds for retreat, such as a hole under the porch or foundations. When it has discovered some such vantage place it feels more at ease, and will generally use this as a central point for further exploration, retreating there at every alarm.

Cats are fully aware of any impending movement or change in the household. So, for a day or two before leaving the



## C A T S

ing any place, it is well to keep an eye on pussy, and at least three or four hours before the time of departure lock her safely in some room where you can lay hand on her



en necessary. Otherwise when the moment comes to put her in her basket you may find that in her excitement she has wandered off.

Cats seem to adapt themselves very well to an indoor life and though no animal can be as completely happy in con-

finement as when it has full liberty, a cat will manage to live very contentedly in a city apartment. Persians and Angoras are essentially house pets. They are far more timid than the ordinary short-haired cat and very sensitive to cold or exposure, and their long fur makes them unfitted for much outdoor adventure. A Persian cat that has broken from tradition and taken to a wandering life is a lamentable object.

The born and bred city cat usually develops a high degree of intelligence, probably through being so much in contact with human beings. He needs all his cleverness both to meet emergencies and to make his wants understood. Some of the cleverest cats I have known have been adopted strays. Where they show particular good sense—far more than dogs show—is in avoiding traffic; you will often see a cat sitting on the curb, waiting for a good chance to cross the road. Instead of rushing out blindly as a dog would do, they first look carefully up and down the street in both directions, taking their own time about it, and when the right moment arrives will cross slowly and deliberately. Though cats do occasionally get run over they seem, considering their number, far less liable to accident than dogs, owing to their greater prudence.

All cats have a habit of wandering at times, and when they are so determined nothing will hold them back. It is never safe for a kitten to stray but a grown cat will usually

find its way home again. A cat is full of secrets and private enterprises of its own, in which it hates any interference. Country cats, especially, will go off, particularly in the fall, for days at a time, traveling long distances, and there is no need to give up hope for a cat even if it stays away several weeks. I know of one cat which regularly went camping every summer, returning safe and sound as soon as the cold weather set in. Often cats in the country go off to hunt, and after a good meal will curl up and sleep somewhere for twenty-four hours. If you miss your pet, it is well to make sure first, by calling and searching, that she is not shut up by accident in some cupboard or outhouse; usually, though not always, she will answer if she hears your voice.

Cats are naturally very clean and it is easy to train a kitten to cleanliness in the house. This is simpler still if you get your kitten in the first place from some household where cats are looked after and understood, as a well-trained mother cat will nearly always bring her kittens up well and train them herself to good habits. Unless your kitten has free access to the garden, you must keep a flat box, or better still a washable pan, filled with dry earth or sawdust in some convenient, but not public, corner. Earth or dry peat moss is best, as ashes or sawdust is liable to get tracked about. Carry your kitten there whenever necessary, and, by making it scratch with its paw, you will very soon teach what is expected. The pan must be kept clean and the

earth frequently changed, as cats are very particular. Do not stand it in a corner where there is wallpaper or you kitten will probably claw the paper off in its efforts to leave everything tidy and invisible. Remember, in choosing location, that a cat's ideas about privacy are not so very different from your own, and a cat will very often refuse to make use of a box that is not more or less screened from view. Sometimes a kitten may be a little difficult to train because, having once made use of a certain corner, its instinct is to return there again; in that case, besides scolding the kitten, you can sprinkle some powdered sulphur or tar camphor in the spot after cleaning, as a deterrent.

Cats like to lie on tables, shelves, or anything that is raised from the ground. It gives them a sense of security and comfort. They can be easily taught, however, that certain tables or shelves are not for their use. Cats are careful, and rarely cause damage by knocking objects over, provided they are not interfered with in their movements.

The natural hunting instinct in cats is very strong, but they can be trained, by constant attention, to let birds alone. Their usual hunting time is in the early morning, and trouble can be avoided by keeping your cat indoors at night. Feed her in the evening, and let her stay in the house till after sunrise. Cats should be accustomed from the first to sleep indoors. Although they are nocturnal by nature, a house cat, unless engaged in mousing, will usually sleep



soundly the night through. Cats need warmth and should not be shut outdoors in bad weather or exposed to cold or dampness. With patience, it is possible to train a cat out of many troublesome habits. Clawing furniture arises from a cat's necessity to exercise its claws and keep them worn down; a log of smooth firewood kept in some handy corner will save the upholstery. Some cats keep their claws in naturally when playing, and they can always be taught to do so if you take the trouble, while they are little, to give a gentle pat on the paw every time their claws come out unnecessarily.

Cats like companionship; they will follow you about from room to room and are intensely interested in whatever is being done in or about the house. They particularly love gardening, and will follow any process of digging or planting with keen interest. Charles Dudley Warner speaks of the great proprietary interest his cat always took in the vegetable garden. They love flowers, and if there is a bowl of cut flowers in the house, your cat will usually be found curled near it. They seem to prefer scented flowers, and will sniff at the blooms and lie for hours close to the vase they are in, whereas plants without blossoms do not seem to interest them so much.

Most of the cats that I know love to go for walks, not always, but when the mood takes them, and when a cat has once decided to go along with you it is almost impossible

to shake him off. "People" in particular is very strong-willed in this matter and once he has made up his mind nothing will deter him. Now, a cat can be quite a nuisance on a long walk. He will mew and delay and tag behind you and, often as not, decide, about a mile from home, that he doesn't like it after all and wants to be carried or taken back. There was one walk during a certain summer which "People" always insisted upon sharing, up a hill behind the house where it was rather rough going through thick woods and where a cat needed a good deal of looking after, so, whenever possible, we would try to slip away without his seeing us. But he always seemed to know when that walk was in prospect and laid his own plans. We might set out casually in an opposite direction, even pretend not to be going for a walk at all, but just as we felt quite sure we had outwitted him this time, we would catch sight of a little black-and-white patch in the distance, hurrying along towards a certain gateway, two fields away, which we had to pass; and there he would presently be, waiting for us, ready to rush out with a little cry of triumph.

Cats are quiet-loving creatures, and much dislike being picked up or caressed against their will. If you want your cat to become attached to you, you should talk to him but never disturb or interfere with him, or try to pet him when he wishes to be left alone. Cats will even sometimes desert a household where they are too much handled or pulled.

about, and seek quieter surroundings. They are most independent, though ready to give affection when it is not forced.

Feeding is very important. Cats need regular meals, and of the right kind. Two good meals a day is not too much. They should have plenty of fresh drinking water always within reach. Milk is good for them, but it does not take the place of water or of food, and some cats will not touch it. A cat should have a varied diet, as far as possible; but as cats are very individual in their tastes and will not eat what they do not like, you must be guided more or less by their inclination. Meat is a necessity to them. They usually prefer it raw and finely chopped, except liver, which should be lightly grilled. Fish must be cooked, and all bones removed. Chicken bones are also dangerous. A cat needs fresh meat or fish every day. Green vegetables are good if they will eat them, but potatoes should be avoided. Many cats eat potatoes whenever they get a chance, but are sick after them. They usually like asparagus, beets, and sweet corn; sometimes tomatoes or cabbage. Cats will often eat plain dry bread or plain cake in preference to bread and milk. Any cereal is good for them in moderation. Sardines or canned salmon are good for a change if you cannot get fresh fish, and cats seem to do well on many of the prepared dog rations, alternated with other food. It is useless to put down just any kind of scraps for a cat to eat



regardless of its personal taste, for many a cat will remain undernourished in the midst of what seems like plenty, and unless almost starving will not touch food that it does not like. The best plan with any cat is to study its tastes a little, and then vary the food as much as possible within those limits.

Cats' food should always be chopped or cut into very small pieces. They cannot bolt their food whole as a dog does, and have difficulty in dealing with large fragments which they cannot easily bite. Set the plate under a table or in some quiet corner. If you have more than one cat feed them on separate dishes, as cats will often refuse to share a dish with another animal and if disturbed in any way while eating will simply withdraw altogether. Where there is a dog, or small kittens, about, it may even be necessary to set the cat's dish high on a bench or shelf, where he may eat undisturbed.

As for dogs, a teaspoonful of olive or mineral oil in their food once a week is good for cats. They like green stuff, and will eat the house plants when they cannot get grass. You can always sow a few oats or some canary seed in a shallow pan for them, keeping it on a window ledge within reach. Fresh catnip is a good tonic for cats; they love to roll or lie on it as well as to eat it, so put the sprigs loose in some box where it will not get scattered and may be eaten at leisure. Dried catnip will do if you cannot obtain



fresh, and a catnip mouse tied somewhere on a long string, so that it swings near the floor, is a toy they will enjoy so long as there is a shred of it left.

A cat's evening meal should be left down for it if not entirely eaten, as cats will often leave part of their last meal and return to it during the night.

Some people never think of grooming a cat because they are supposed to, and do, keep their own fur in good order. A cat should never be washed, but brushing, with not too hard a brush, is good for their fur and they generally enjoy

A cat sheds its coat twice a year, in the spring and the fall, and during that time you should brush and comb your cat at least once every day. This gets rid of the loose hair, which otherwise is often swallowed and sets up irritation.

It is astonishing how much loose hair you can get off an ordinary short-haired cat by combing. A cat that runs free in the country gets rid of much of this hair by rolling on the ground, but an indoor cat cannot do this. A Persian needs particular attention in this respect; it is impossible for it to keep its long thick hair in order with the tongue, and when the hair begins to come out it is a positive danger to the cat. A Persian or Angora should be kept only when it is possible to give it every care and personal attention.

Fleas, on either cats or dogs, are a usual trouble in the country, where in summer it is very difficult to avoid them. Regular combing and brushing, in either case, is the best

check. Bathing will help to get rid of them with dogs but not altogether. Persian powder or Black Flag is the best thing to use for either a cat or a dog. Stand the animal on a piece of old sheeting, then apply the powder with one of the small bellows sold for this purpose, blowing it gently well in under the fur all over, excepting on the head. Roll it in thoroughly, then gather the sheet up so as to roll the animal in it, with only the head out. Now take a small fine comb smeared with vaseline and comb the head well to get rid of the fleas that will have worked their way up to the head and after you have gone over it thoroughly, unwrap the sheet and brush out the powder from the rest of the body by which time most of the fleas will have dropped off. Never spray a cat or dog with any fly spray or vermin killer; these are usually irritant and sometimes poisonous if licked off.

You may have heard that a cat has nine lives, but don't believe it. Little kittens are quite delicate and can be more easily injured than one thinks. Grown cats sometimes show great resistance in recovering from accidental injuries, but they seem to have very little resistance to disease. So if your cat falls sick don't waste time wondering about it, but take it to a veterinarian right away. The impulse of sick cats is always to hide themselves. They will crawl or squeeze themselves into the most remote corners and refuse to come out. Weakness overtakes them rapidly, and they may die before

you can find them. Pneumonia or enteritis can carry a cat off in very few days. If your pet refuses food, seems dull and wretched, and tries to hide away from you, be very watchful.

Purring is not always a sign of well-being. Contrary to general belief, a cat in great pain or distress will often purr persistently, but it is a hoarse irregular purring, quite unmistakable if you have once heard it.

Fits in a kitten should be treated as with a puppy, but, since a kitten will claw or scratch when in a fit, it is safer to throw a cloth or towel right over it and pick it up that way. Indigestion is the most usual cause of fits.

Kittens should not be taken from their mother before they are at least ten weeks old and can eat entirely by themselves. They should have less meat than grown cats and rather more milk, until they are six months old. Kittens need good food, but are very greedy and will overeat unless watched. If your cat has kittens, do not try to bring up more than two, and never give a kitten away unless you are perfectly sure it is going to a good home where it will be well looked after. Kittens must not be allowed to stray and should not be left unwatched out of doors. A young kitten is very defenseless. It cannot find its way home if it wanders off and is likely to be set upon by dogs, or to climb up somewhere where it cannot get down again without help.



There are certain accidents to which cats are particularly liable. One is getting fishbones, or more often a fragment of the thin bone of a chicken carcass, lodged in the back of the throat. This can be removed with a pair of blunt forceps, first rolling the cat in a thick bath towel to prevent struggling, but it needs a careful and steady hand. For some reason, it seems very difficult for a cat to get rid of anything that it accidentally gets into its mouth, except by an effort to swallow it. Beware of needles, especially threaded needles left about with a tempting dangling end. A number of pet cats are brought into clinics with a threaded needle lodged in the throat. If your cat has difficulty in eating, paws at its mouth, or even coughs persistently for no apparent reason, there may be some trouble of this kind. If it is nothing that you can locate yourself or remove easily, take the cat to a veterinary for examination. Cats also have trouble sometimes with their teeth; a tooth may need to be extracted or cleaned, and if this is neglected there may be serious ailment.

Never let your cat form the habit which many cats will form—of lying at the foot of a stairway or on one of the steps. This is a real danger not only to the cat but to anyone going hurriedly up or down. Do not put a collar or ribbon on a cat's neck. It is most unsafe. The collar may catch on a nail or projection when the cat is climbing, or it may get its foot or jaw wedged in it and so strangle. The Animal



Rescue League asks householders not to throw out meat or fish cans without first beating them flat, as so many cats have had their heads caught in cans and have been severely injured before the can could be cut off. This is a precaution worth remembering both for the safety of your own pet and for that of others.

If you live in the country, you must keep extra watch over your pet during the hunting season, and also when the hay is being cut. If there is a mowing machine in use anywhere near, it is best to shut your cat up till the work is safely over. Cats are particularly fond of hunting in long grass and come to regard any neighboring meadow as their own domain. The whirr of the machine terrifies and confuses them and in trying to avoid danger they often run straight into it, as the blades move invisibly under the thick grass. So many country cats—and small dogs too—either have been killed outright or have lost one or more limbs in this way that it is better for your pet to suffer a day's imprisonment than to run any such risk.

Cats have an idea that they can always look after themselves better in an emergency than anyone else can. This is largely true, but it also makes them very difficult to manage if for any reason they have to be picked up and held when they are frightened. A badly scared cat may scratch quite severely. The way to pick up a cat, ordinarily, is by the loose skin behind the shoulders, supporting its

body at the same time, but if you ever need to hold or carry a very nervous cat, with nothing to wrap around it, a good way is to grasp both forelegs firmly close up to the shoulder which will keep them straightened down, and at the same time tuck the cat's body firmly under your arm so that it cannot struggle with its hind legs. It is possible to hold a cat quite comfortably and yet securely in this way.

Cats have been known to live to seventeen or eighteen years of age.



## CHAPTER VI

### RABBITS

The rabbit always seems more or less of a storybook character. It has figured in legend, folklore, and fairy tale, and always as its amusing, whimsical self. We have the Easter rabbits, the fussy little white rabbit in "Alice in Wonderland," Brer Rabbit, the little wise hare of Irish folktale, Peter Rabbit, and countless others. In fact, in every rabbit there seems somewhere to be a touch of magic. It is true that a rabbit which is kept all the time cooped

up in a small hutch, and which you visit perhaps a couple of times a day to poke cabbage leaves between the bars, can seem just as dull and uninteresting as any other animal would if kept under the same conditions; but if you take the trouble to treat your rabbit as you would a cat or a dog, allow it certain liberty, and make a real companion of it, you will find no end to its amusing tricks and peculiarities. You will never find two rabbits just alike, though there are some characteristics which all rabbits seem to have in common. All the rabbits which have shared our home at various times have been treated as members of the household. They have shown quite definite personalities, and have repaid our confidence over and over again in friendliness and entertainment.

There is no creature quite so comical as a rabbit, unless it is a baby goat. They seem to know that they are funny and do not in the least mind being laughed at; in fact they rather enjoy it, and act as if their antics were really for your amusement, and they themselves quite ready to share in the joke.

A rabbit that is handled from the time it is small, and always well treated, will become very tame, and will usually stay about the house or yard of its own accord. In Italy, rabbits are kept loose about the stables or barnyard which they share with the chickens, and seldom seem to wander; and even in towns, they are often kept in the same



way by the wood and charcoal dealers, so that in passing an open yard or gateway you will see a pair of bright eyes staring at you across the stacked logs, or a white tail whisking out of sight behind a pile of fagots.

Rabbits are full of perversity and a rabbit that is running loose, and determined to stay so, is certainly the hardest thing in the world to catch; but if you give up the attempt, he is almost sure to come up of his own accord sooner or later and flop down with a little tired sigh by your side or snuggle up into your lap to rest.

You will need some sort of house for your rabbit to stay in at night, or when he cannot be left at liberty, and this should be properly built. As he may have to spend a good deal of his time in it, it should be at least three feet long by a foot and a half wide and deep, and with one-third of the space partitioned off for a sleeping box, as rabbits like to sleep in the dark. There must be a door to each part, to clean it out by. One long wooden box, or two boxes joined together, with a doorway cut between, will do, and you can use chicken wire for the front. The work on a rabbit hutch need not be extra fine, but it must be strong and practical. The larger the hutch, the better; the proportions I have given are the smallest allowable. Bore some half-inch holes in the floor, near the back, for drainage, and set the hutch to stand with a slight backward slope, to keep the floor

dry. Roof the top with tar paper or a piece of linoleum, and stand the hutch in the shade.

Strange dogs are the chief danger to rabbits, so let me impress upon you to have your hutch strongly built, and raised at least three feet from the ground. Dogs will tear through almost anything to get at a caged rabbit at night and chicken wire alone is no protection. If your hutch stands out of doors, it should have a stout shutter, with ventilation holes bored in it, to fasten across the front at night. A rabbit that is loose will always use its wits and slip into some hole or cranny, but a caged rabbit, once the hutch is broken into, has no chance for escape. Dogs are far more likely to attack a rabbit at night than during the day.

Rabbits need plenty of air and ventilation but they should be protected from too much cold, or from damp. The fact that wild rabbits run about in the snow does not mean that your rabbit can live out of doors in winter. The wild rabbit has his own snug nest to retire to, and he keeps warm by exercise, while a rabbit in a hutch can only huddle up and shiver. A tight barn or dry basement is the best place to keep your rabbit during the cold winter months.

Use hay or straw for bedding, with clean sawdust under keep plenty of sawdust on the floor and change it every day. A rabbit hutch must be kept very clean. Rabbits are naturally cleanly animals, and a rabbit that is used to being

at liberty about a house will soon learn to be as tidy in his ways as a cat or dog will be. He will choose his own corner for the purpose and keep to it, and will make use of a pan of sawdust set down there for him.

Never lift a rabbit by its ears. The proper way to pick it up is by the loose skin above the shoulders, putting your other hand beneath to support its weight and to prevent it from kicking and struggling. A kick from a rabbit's hind-leg, if you lift it carelessly, can cause a very nasty scratch.

Rabbits need some green food every day, but should not be fed on it entirely. Almost any root vegetables are good for them, such as beets, carrots, or turnips, either whole or the tops and parings from the kitchen; pea pods, lettuce, cut clover or grass. Much cabbage is apt to give the hutch an unpleasant odor. Green stuff should not be left lying around, but should be given only in such quantities as the rabbit will eat. In addition to this rabbits need sweet clean hay and some oats or bran; occasional dry bread crusts, and sometimes a warm bran mash, not too moist, in cold weather. You can make this by pouring hot water or milk and water on the dry bran, and mixing it fairly stiff and crumbly. You can give mixed oats and bran in the morning, green stuff at midday, and some hay with a root vegetable at night.

There are very few things, in fact, that a rabbit will not eat; very little comes amiss to him. I have known more



than one pet rabbit who was fond of coffee and would drink it out of a spoon, standing up on his hind legs by his owner's chair at the breakfast table.

Do not give green stuff that is wilted or wet, and don't give too much cut grass. A rabbit foraging for himself will browse slowly, a bit here and a bit there, but when fresh grass is given him by handfuls, ready cut, he is apt to eat quickly and too much at a time. Where there are plenty of lawn trimmings it is better to let the cut grass dry out into hay and use it in this way than to feed it fresh and probably damp. Rabbits will not touch food that is soiled or trampled.

Bedding should be thoroughly dry and clean. Rabbits are not very subject to illness and with proper care your bunny should never be sick. Sickness is nearly always due to chill, to a damp or dirty hutch, or to careless feeding. If your rabbit seems mopey change his diet for a day or two; perhaps he has been getting too much of one kind of food. The trouble is very often too much green food.

Rabbits need plenty of drinking water.

Baby rabbits when first born are naked and quite helpless. At about ten days old, their fur begins to grow; a little later their eyes open, and in about three weeks or so they are running about. From the time a mother rabbit first begins to prepare the nest for her young ones, which she will do by biting up the straw in her sleeping box to



make it soft and comfortable, and even adding bits of fur plucked from her own warm coat, she must be kept alone in the hutch and not disturbed in any way. This is very important. Give her plenty of soft bedding to use as she wants, and good food. After a few days, you may take one look into the sleeping box while the mother is feeding, just to see that the young ones are all right, but do not on any account try to handle or disturb them. A mother rabbit nurses her young ones for several weeks, and while doing so she must have nourishing food, with a bowl of bran mash every morning.

Have you ever seen a rabbit dance? I don't mean the funny sidewise skips that they give when at play, but a real dance. Take your rabbit alone in a room with you some time, and begin by walking quietly up and down. After a little while you'll find that he will begin walking up and down with you, keeping pace and turning as you turn. Presently he may vary this by little skips and swirls of his own, going faster and faster, and now if you stand still, and if he is like all the rabbits I have ever known, he will begin to run round and round you in a circle, first in one direction and then in the other. I don't know at all why rabbits like to do this, but I know that they will, and that they seem to take a great deal of pleasure in the performance. In a little while your rabbit will get so in the habit of this that you can make him dance at

almost any time just by getting up and taking a few steps yourself. I discovered this trick first with a little brown rabbit called "Nicky," who liked nothing better than to follow anyone around the room who was using a broom. I soon found that his movements seemed to have some intention and also that he would dance round one just the same if the broom wasn't there. Since then I have tried it out with several other rabbits, and found that they nearly always respond.

A rabbit also likes to amuse himself by jumping on and off a box or low chair, and will keep it up for a long time usually giving little stamps with his foot as well. Young rabbits stamp for fun, but an older rabbit will stamp when he is angry or startled, in defiance, or to give the alarm to his companions, just as a woodchuck will whistle. It is a loud, sharp rap given with the hind foot, and it makes an astonishing noise. An angry rabbit will also squeal with rage, as you may find if you catch your rabbit suddenly when he doesn't want to be caught. Rabbits, as a rule, do not care to be held or nursed but they will often jump on your lap or snuggle down beside you of their own free will. Our rabbits used to lie by the open fire of an evening stretching out full length, just as a dog does, to bask in the warmth.

Some friends living in India, who were very fond of all animals but disliked the idea of keeping them caged

had a large compound or fenced yard around the house in which all their pets ran free. Besides dogs and cats, there were guinea pigs, pheasants, a mongoose, a pet goat and one big old rabbit. This rabbit appointed himself guardian of the compound; he would keep sentry watch and warn the other animals by stamping if an intruder came near. He was quite fierce with strange dogs, and had been known to drive a prowling collie right out of the compound, rushing at him and kicking with his powerful hind legs and pursuing him out of the gate and down the road. I have myself seen a rabbit chase a disagreeable hen for pure mischief, not hurting her, but rushing at her, head down, whenever she came near.

Rabbits are very companionable, full of curiosity, and show the same interest in everything that a cat will. They have something of the character of a cat, they are full of whimsies and very fond of playing games of their own. Like cats, too, they get very wild and full of pranks toward us.

Though I hate to say it, after having told you of all their amusing tricks, it must also be admitted that they are quite mischievous and have no idea at all of property. They think it great fun, for instance, to steal carrots and potatoes out of the vegetable basket, and poke their noses into cupboards and carry away anything they take a fancy to. They will try their teeth on wicker or woodwork, eat holes in



woolen sweaters and—most fascinating to them of all—tear wall paper off in long strips and throw it on the floor. Wall paper, especially with a pattern on it, is something they never seem able to resist if left alone with it too long without watching.

Fluffy Ruffles, a particularly naughty rabbit, would curl down on one's skirt and apparently sleep there quite innocently, but when she woke up and hopped away there would be, more often than not, a large hole nibbled out. Being a nursery rabbit, she took every opportunity of going to bed with the children, where she would snuggle down under the covers and mustn't be disturbed, poor little bunny, because she was so sleepy and comfortable, but she really spent the time busily cutting long slashes in the sheets with her chisel-like teeth. Originally a waif—she was found when a baby trying to cross a city thoroughfare under the electric lights and we never discovered where she came from nor to whom she had belonged—she was the only thoroughly bad rabbit we ever had. The others were much better behaved, and we always made allowance for Fluffy's early lack of education, especially when she would lay her head lovingly against one's knee and then suddenly nip one with great swiftness and precision. She never bit seriously, only a sharp pinch, but she was the only rabbit I have known who ever bit at all.

Rabbits like to dig, and even tame rabbits never qu



lose their instinct for burrowing, and will dig their way through or under almost any enclosure, and through practically any substance but cement or wire netting.

Wild rabbits will scarcely ever live in captivity. Baby rabbits are sometimes caught by chance, or are picked up in the hay field, but it is hopeless to try to keep them. They never get really tame, like a domesticated rabbit, and the most one can do is to keep them for a day or so and then let them go again, where there is no danger from dogs. Even a baby rabbit can look after itself quite well when it is free. I had heard of tame jackrabbits and thought it would be nice to have one, until one summer some boys brought me a baby jackrabbit which they had picked up, tangled in the long grass before the mowing machine, fortunately unhurt, but very frightened. He was the prettiest baby imaginable, with very long ears and absurd, lanky hindlegs that stretched right out in front of him when he sat down, almost like those of a kangaroo. With all ears and legs he looked, and big soft brown eyes. I put him in an empty room for the time being, where he refused all food and sat miserably hunched in a corner, with his face to the wall, until the mowing was safely over and I could take him out and let him loose again in the fields. He made no effort to escape when one picked him up, but sat quite still in one's hands, holding his breath and staring. When I finally set him on the earth—it was

a moonlight evening—he sat for a moment perfectly rigid still too frightened to move, till I gave him a little push and then he took one leap and scampered off as fast as he could go over the stubble.

The boy who had found him said that his younger brothers had tried to tame jackrabbits but it was no use in his words: “They won’t do nothing but sit in a corner and stare at you, and keep right on sitting there till they die.”

So, much as I would have liked to keep him, I was glad to have set my baby jackrabbit free in time.



## CHAPTER VII

### GUINEA PIGS

Choosing between guinea pigs is one of the hardest tasks in the world. They are so pretty, so smart and impudent in expression, and so different one from another in their marking and color that it is almost impossible to make up your mind which you want most. The first guinea pigs I ever bought were very simple; there were only two, so I took them both and named them Paul and Virginia. Later Paul died—an avoidable accident of which I was ignorant at the time but of which I shall warn you later. When it came to replacing Paul, there was this time only one, an elderly and rather surly Paul, so we took him. Later, when the guinea pig spell was steadily gaining power and two didn't seem nearly enough, came another visit to the guinea pig



shop, this time newly stocked (evidently cheered by such steady customers) and I well remember how impatient the storekeeper became when, having it on my conscience not to buy more than two, I stood for what must have been nearly half an hour, quite unable to decide, picking up one guinea pig and then putting it down to reach for another which I just caught sight of, in a sort of helpless dream only broken by the storekeeper finally remarking that any guinea pig looked good once you got it home, and that he had wanted *some* time to close the store and go to his supper!

There are three kinds of guinea pigs, or cavies; the Bolivian, smooth-coated and sometimes called the "English" guinea pig; the Abyssinian, rough-coated, with hair that grows in queer little rosettes all over its body, looking as if it had been parted everywhere in the wrong places; and the aristocratic long-haired Peruvian. In color they vary. They are white; self-colored, in black, brown, red and yellow; piebald; Dutch marked, with a white nose, colored head and broad stripe around the body, and the most attractive tortoiseshell and "calico," all colors mixed, so there is plenty of choice. The Peruvian is usually pure white with ruby eyes. Unless you have a lot of time to devote to it I don't advise the Peruvian because it requires so much care in grooming and because it is not, to my mind, nearly so pretty nor so amusing as its short-haired cousins. The



Peruvian has hair so long and silky that it not only falls quite over its face but actually trails on the ground, and when I tell you that the pure-bred specimens need not only constant combing and brushing to keep them presentable but very often have their long tresses done up in curl papers by their proud owners to keep them out of the way, you will agree that so much trouble is scarcely worth while.

One peculiarity of guinea pigs is that they are made "all one piece," as it were. When you handle a puppy or a rabbit, you will have noticed that its skin is quite loose, that you can gather it up in your hand, and it is by the help of this loose skin that you usually pick up any small animal without in any way hurting it. A guinea pig—and that may be one reason why it got its name—has no such loose skin anywhere. Its skin seems one with its body, like your own, with the hair growing directly out of it, so you cannot get hold of its skin anywhere, and to pull its fur hurts just as sharply as having your own hair pulled, probably more. And, as if they knew this, guinea pigs are usually very sensitive and suspicious about being touched. When you attempt to lay hands on them, they will usually, unless they know you very well, sheer off with a very little grunt and shrug. The proper way to pick a guinea pig up is to put your hand over its body at the shoulders, so that your fingers come well underneath, and

lift it that way, and if it's a big guinea pig you must use both hands. In other words, hold a guinea pig from underneath, well supported, and never from above. Its legs being very short, and its body heavy in proportion, you must be careful never to let it drop, or jump off from a height, as it can easily receive serious injury. A guinea pig is built to run on the ground, and will never willingly leave it; he is incapable of climbing and his blunt claws give very little foothold.

Guinea pigs are pretty hardy on the whole, and like rabbits should live for a good many years. What they seem unable to withstand is dampness and also sudden cold. Once first Paul, when I was inexperienced with guinea pigs, died overnight because his box was left standing on a chilly floor, and dealers have told me that they very often lose guinea pigs during an unexpected cold snap. Their hutches must be well raised from the ground; in winter, especially at night, they should not be kept in a cold place, and they must have plenty of warm dry bedding.

A guinea pig suffering from chill, or from a cold accompanied by sneezing, may be given two or three drops of castor oil, followed by warm milk, and should be kept for a few hours warmly wrapped. An old sweater or piece of woolen underwear is a good thing to let him sleep in until he has recovered.

You can give them the same food as rabbits: carrots

ran or oats—plain rolled oats in small quantity are good—sweet hay, bread crusts and fresh green stuff. They should not be given potato parings. They are very fond of grass, and of the short clover that grows on lawns. They will drink milk, and like warm bread and milk in winter. Don't forget clean drinking water, and, by the way, never listen to the recommendation that this or that animal "never drinks." I have heard it said of goats, of rabbits, and also of guinea pigs, and some persons will solemnly assure you that guinea pigs have died from being given water to drink. What may happen is that a very thirsty animal, kept for a long time without water, will sometimes drink so much when it first gets the chance as to make itself seriously ill. Water is a necessity to all living creatures. Even flies and wasps drink, as you may see almost any summer day watching them alight near the overflow of a spring or outdoor cistern.

Like rabbits, guinea pigs have a very varied taste. Green stuff, and plenty of it, root vegetables and oats, as I say, are their staples, but they seem willing to try almost anything. Tiddles, best-loved of all our guinea pigs, loved to be invited to nursery parties where he would sit up and devour chocolate pudding, fruit and layer cake; he usually drank sweetened tea at tea time from a spoon, clinging to it with both claws and squealing and fussing if you tried to take it away from him, and I have told elsewhere



of the surprise he once caused by drinking warm chocolate in the same way at the buffet of a big Paris railroad station on his way from Italy to England. A guinea pig will have a wonderful time at a dolls' tea party and can always be relied upon to do justice to the hostess's provisions. Guinea pigs eat quite a good deal for their size not in large quantities at a time but almost continuously and they are incapable of going for any length of time without food of some sort. They will eat their bedding rather than go hungry.

As a guinea pig does not climb, and cannot jump more than a few inches off the ground, a fairly low barrier will keep them within bounds, but they *must* be very securely protected from chance dogs or cats. A regular hutch, as for rabbits, is the best arrangement, but failing this a fairly sized box with wire netting over the top will do, raised well from the floor. Inside this you can place a smaller box upside down, with a hole cut in one side, for sleeping quarters. A guinea pig does not need much height for a sleeping box; eight inches will do, and given this height he can also scramble up and sit on the top of it, if he likes. Plenty of soft hay, straw or even fine wood shavings should be supplied for bedding, and sawdust frequently changed will keep the cage floor dry. Cleanliness is very important. Guinea pigs have very little natural smell and their hutch, if well kept, should be perfectly free from odor.



## GUINEA PIGS

If you have two or more guinea pigs, and plenty of space, they much enjoy a regular house, like mice. They love running in and out and up and down and will make use of any number of sloping stairways, extra entrances, and passages, that you care to contrive for them.

Baby guinea pigs are the prettiest things imaginable. Unlike mice and rabbits, they are born fully equipped to run about and fend for themselves, and, although the mother nurses them, they will begin to nibble food when two or three days old, looking in every respect complete miniatures of their parents. Besides green stuff they should be given bread and milk or bran mash every day till they be three or four weeks old. Guinea pigs always seem very proud of their babies, and no wonder. The mother may be jealous at first if you attempt to touch them, but she is far less suspicious and resentful in this respect than the mother rabbit. Possibly she knows that her babies are better able to take care of themselves.

A guinea pig rarely has more than four young ones at a time, usually two or three.

Don't think your guinea pig is complaining when he grumbles or squeaks. Guinea pigs are great chatterboxes. If they can't find anyone to listen to them they will talk to themselves. They patter to and fro, chatting about everything they see, and their voices have a queer little conversational tone, varying from a low mutter to sudden high

squeals of excitement. They learn very quickly to recognize your step, and will break out at once into a little chorus of welcome. No one need be dull with a guinea pig around.

Their hearing is very acute. It is said that a guinea pig is the only animal you need never be afraid of stepping on in the dark, and I can well believe it. There used to be a belief that a guinea pig would keep rats away, and many pigeon fanciers always kept a guinea pig or two in their pigeon loft for this reason. There may be truth in this for a guinea pig can be very pugnacious towards an animal of its own size, and their compact shape and thick close coat offer no advantage to an adversary. A guinea pig is, moreover, extremely quick on its feet, and cannot be taken by surprise. You can try this with your own guinea pig some day when he is running about the floor, and see how hard it is to creep up behind him. He will whirl round like a flash every time, so that he is always facing you.

If they have one marked quality it is excessive prudence. Guinea pigs never care to be exposed in the open. They seem positively afraid of open spaces and a sudden falling shadow will terrify them. They came originally from hot dry climates and in their wild state probably lived on open ground with sparse vegetation, where their most constant enemy would have been the hawk circling overhead. To this day, a guinea pig will always instinctively make for

over, wherever he is; out of doors he will run to the nearest tall grass or clump of weeds and in the house he prefers, when making his tour of the room, to keep close to the wall or under the furniture, and he will never willingly cross an open space without much trepidation. You have to be very careful with a guinea pig out of doors, for he will dive unfailingly for any shrubbery, overgrown bank, old stone wall where he will be completely invisible, and unless his little squeaky voice answers when you call, you may have some difficulty in locating him and coaxing him out again.

Tiddles did a good deal of traveling, but for some years his life was spent mostly in cities. One of the pleasures he most looked forward to, on moving one summer to the country, was seeing Tiddles' delight on finding himself surrounded for the first time by real grass. But when the anticipated moment arrived and he was carried out and laid down in the middle of a large sunny lawn, he gave the horrified look about him, dived for the nearest shelter, which happened to be someone's coatsleeve, and squeezed himself into it, refusing with indignant squeals to be dragged out. And for a long time, whenever he was put down on the ground out of doors he would claw beseechingly at the owner's ankles and try to climb up them.

A guinea pig seems to feel a real sense of protection in a human friend, and is always happy if he can snuggle

up your sleeve or under your coat, where he will stay for hours until you shake him out. He loves to have his ears scratched, and will stretch out with a little sigh of contentment that means "Please do it again." On the whole guinea pigs are among the most appreciative, friendly, and satisfactory of all small pets.

In conclusion, if you have never seen a sleepy guinea pig yawning you have missed one of the very funniest sights in the world.





## CHAPTER VIII

### BIRDS

The proper care of any small cage bird is not a very difficult matter, once it is understood, and considering the great pleasure they can give one the time and trouble necessary to spend on their comfort seems a very small measure of repayment. Unfortunately, being so small a job, it is easily to be overlooked or scamped in performance. All readers of "Little Women" will remember the fate that overtook Beth's canary, when the four girls decided to spend one day doing exactly as they chose, and, without giving quite such a tragic example, history is still apt to repeat itself, in minor degree. It seems as though a task which only takes a few minutes can be done just as well

one time as another. It may be inconvenient to attend to the canary at a certain moment, one is in a hurry, or something else needs to be done first. So long as there is, apparently, seed in the hopper and water in the drinking pan, even if the floor of the cage is a little untidy, why, it can just as well be done tomorrow instead; and so the poor little bird, who is so dependent on his human guardian, is left with perhaps a dish half full of husks instead of fresh seed and with drinking water that is stale and slimy; and though he may continue to hop about and chirp cheerfully, he is certainly not getting the care due to him.

All pets need regularity in their care, but a bird is particularly dependent upon it. The only way is to fix a certain hour, preferably early in the morning, to attend to your pet, and to keep to it strictly. It does not take very long to empty and refill the seed hopper, wash the drinking pan and put fresh water in it, and brush off the cage floor, and once it's done, it's done; and, though your pet may need other attention during the day, you know he at least is not going to pass the hours in discomfort through hunger or thirst.

A canary is usually the first bird that anyone keeps, and being bred in captivity, is the most suitable of any for a cage pet. In keeping a canary, you do not feel that you are depriving a free creature of its liberty, for the domestic canary has never been used to freedom and if set free would

not know what to do or even how to find its own food. In fact, an escaped canary, if too confused to find its way home again, as it will often try to do, has a pretty hard time of it, and is generally terrified and quite helpless.

Almost any canary will become tame and friendly with proper care, but in buying a canary buy a young one, as this is more easily tamed and learns more readily to know and trust you than does an older bird that has perhaps passed through several hands, or may even have been frightened or cowed by careless treatment before you get it. As canaries breed in spring, early fall is a good time to buy your bird, which will then be four or five months old. A reliable dealer will advise you about your choice, but his own birds are bought from someone else in the first place, so it is better, if you know anyone who raises canaries, to get a young bird directly from him.

The first consideration is the kind of cage you are going to keep it in. Most canary cages are made largely for ornament. The thought is all for the appearance of the cage and not for the creature that is to live in it. The usual brass or metal cage, open all the way round, is the worst thing that could be devised from the bird's point of view. It offers no protection from draught and, worse still, it gives no privacy. A bird is a highly nervous creature, and yet it is expected to live happily, exposed on every side to noises, sudden movements, a thousand alarming sights and sounds

which it does not understand and from which it has no possibility of refuge. The greater part of a canary's restless hopping and fluttering is due to nervousness and continual alarm.

The best kind of cage, if you are really considering your bird, is what is known as a "breeding cage"; that is, an oblong cage, about a foot and a half long by a foot deep with wires only at the front and ends, made to stand or hang against a wall, which is where a bird cage should be. You can get quite sightly cages of this type, lacquered or enameled, or of wood with tinned-wire bars. If you must have a brass cage, choose one oblong in shape, not round nor square, and with the greatest length possible, and either hang it on a wall or stand it on a table with one side near the wall. It must be where the bird can get plenty of light and some sunlight, but it should not be in the middle of the room or hung directly in the open window. A small table in a corner, near a window, is about the best place. Here the bird can see all that is going on but will not be startled by sudden sounds or unexpected movements behind his back.

The perches should be smooth and not too large, and set where they are convenient for feeding; not in the middle of the cage where they interfere with movement. There should be one perch high up where the bird can sleep at night. It is not necessary to cover a canary's cage at night



living room. If the room is brightly lighted of an evening, you can arrange a small screen that will protect the bird from disturbance or even lay a newspaper over the top of the cage while the lights are on.

A brass cage is liable to corrode, so it must be kept very clean and examined often. Brass is usually lacquered for protection, so do not rub the surface with paste or metal polish. Wipe it off with a soft cloth and clean warm water. The bottom of the cage should have a removable tray, which is best made of zinc. This must be sprinkled with clean sand or bird gravel, which your bird also eats to help him digest his food. Unless you can get perfectly clean river sand it is best to use the prepared gravel which comes in packages; never use earth, sawdust or road sand in the cage. The floor should be brushed over every day and twice a week the tray must be thoroughly washed, if it is of metal, or else well scraped. The perches also should be scraped once a week, or oftener if necessary. The drinking pan must be washed every day, otherwise it will get slimy. It should never stand in the sun; sun-heated or tepid drinking water is very bad for birds. When you give fresh seed turn out whatever remains in the hopper and blow on it well to remove all husks before adding the fresh seed. Birds often sit with their heads over the seed pan, dropping the empty husks back, and unless you look well to this it is easy to

think your pet has plenty of seed when it really has only husks.

All birds need to bathe and most canaries will bathe regularly. A porcelain bath that can be set on the cage floor is better than the hook-on kind. It should be half-filled with tepid water, and removed as soon as the bird has finished. If, after repeated trial, your canary refuses to bathe at all, he must be sprayed once a week with tepid water from an atomizer.

When your bird first arrives, set his cage in a quiet part of the room and let him get well used to his surroundings. Don't go near the cage oftener than is necessary for cleaning it or giving him food, but when you do, speak to the bird and make a habit of speaking to him as you pass by. If you make no pointed effort, for several days, to engage his attention, he will begin to notice your movements of his own accord, watch you, and perhaps chirp in reply when you speak to him. Make no attempt to handle him for some time. Then try offering him a piece of sweet fruit or a lettuce leaf, and see whether he will come and peck at it while your hand is still near the cage, keeping very quiet. Remember that a bird is always startled and mistrustful of any sudden movement. The less attention you appear to be paying to him, the more he will pay to you. It may take some time before he is really used to you and ready to be friendly.

When you feel quite sure of him, when he will eat from your hand or come quite close to your finger in the cage, you may try opening the cage door and letting him fly in the room. All doors and windows must be closed, and a screen put before the chimney, if there is one. Let him out before feeding, so that he will return to the cage for food. Leave the cage door wide open, and after he has explored the room for some time he will probably return to his cage and perch on or near it. Do not disturb him, but wait till he hops in of his own accord before closing the cage door gently. If it is necessary to catch a bird, avoid frightening him as much as possible, come up quietly and put your hand over him if you can, if not you may drop a cloth over him and catch him that way. Usually a canary that has been kept for six months or more will be tame enough to fly about the room for an hour or so every day, returning to his cage of his own accord, and will much enjoy doing so. It is a good plan, then, to let him take his bath while out of the cage.

Any sudden noise, like the tearing of calico, the sudden rustle of paper or banging of a door, will frighten a bird, and sometimes dangerously. On the other hand, birds seem to like familiar noises. Any sound of activity, like a typewriter, a sewing machine, or even the rattle of dishes, will usually set a canary singing at the top of his voice, as though in rivalry. Canaries have no objection to activity about them,



and will hatch and bring up their young in a busy living room or kitchen, with no sign of disturbance.

A canary's staple food is canary seed, mixed with millet which is a small round light-colored seed, and the darker round seed known as "rape." This is the usual mixture sold for them, which may, however, contain some hemp. Hemp is a full, glossy seed, much larger than canary seed and can be recognized by its size. It is very fattening and therefore, not too good for cage birds. It should be given only occasionally, a pinch at a time, in winter or during the moulting season. In addition to seed and clean drinking water, canaries need some green stuff, either watercress, chickweed, if you can find it growing wild, or a tender lettuce leaf. All green stuff must be very fresh. They are also very fond of wild grass seeds and the green seedheads of plantain. You can give them a piece of ripe banana, not too soft, a white grape cut in halves or a bit of sweet apple, pear or cherry. Sugar they like, but it is not very good for them. A piece of cuttlefish bone should be kept in the cage.

During the moulting season, in late summer, canaries need a little extra care and good food. A little flax or poppy seed is good for them then, or some of the prepared food sold for this purpose. Old-fashioned canary fanciers used to drop a rusty nail in the drinking water, for a tonic. A bird loses his voice while moulting, seems sometimes dispirited or mopey, and his appetite also decreases. Plenty of



## B I R D S

fresh green stuff and occasional ripe fruit will help to cheer him up.

Canaries can stand cold, but not a draught. Draughts, sudden changes of temperature, or currents of cold air are the worst enemies of cage birds. Warmth is essential in



treating a sick bird, and very often a bird that seems ill or is suffering from chill can be restored simply by wrapping loosely in warm flannel and keeping it for some days in a warm even temperature. A bird that has taken a cold or chill may also be given a drop or two of pure brandy or cordial in the drinking water.

There are certain small parasites which attack birds, though this should not happen if the cage is kept clean. The bird must be treated with Persian powder dusted well in under the feathers and the cage also dusted and disinfected. In bad cases, it may be necessary to get a new cage.

As canaries grow older, their claws sometimes grow to awkward length and need trimming, and unless this is done the bird will have difficulty in holding to his perch. If the claws are very long and beginning to grow curled over they should be cut, very carefully, with a pair of sharp scissors. Hold the claw up to the light and be careful to snip off only part of the transparent tip. If your bird seems to suffer from sore or roughened feet, you can relieve this by holding the feet for a few moments daily in warm water, drying them carefully, and then rubbing in a little borated vaseline or sweet oil. Make sure that the perches are smooth and clean.

Cage birds are divided by bird fanciers into two classes, hard-billed and soft-billed. Of the hard-billed, or seed-eating birds your canary is the typical example, and the rules for his feeding will apply also to any small bird of the seed-eating kind. To this class belong all the finches and most of the smaller imported foreign birds.

Bullfinches make delightful pets. They are easily tamed and can be taught to whistle tunes. They are fairly hardy, and so also are Java sparrows, those pretty rose-billed birds,

both grey and white. The smaller kinds of birds do better on plain millet than mixed canary seed, and they eat wild grass seeds as well. Budgerigars, the little green and yellow brindled grass parakeets from Australia, are also seed eaters. They like companionship and are best kept in pairs. Budgerigars are charming little pets, very gentle and friendly. They allow themselves to be handled readily, and will learn to sit on your shoulder or walk up your arm. Given a large enough cage and a hollow coconut shell or box to nest in, they will breed and hatch out their young, always two at a time, almost as freely in captivity as do canaries. They are not very happy in the ordinary square bird cage; they need a long-shaped cage with plenty of floor space, and prefer to sleep in a dark nesting box rather than on a high perch.

Not all birds eat seed. The soft-billed birds, so called, like thrushes, starlings, larks, and most of our native song birds, are insect eaters. The bird laws, very rightly, prevent most of these birds from being caught or kept in captivity. Imported birds, however, are often sold. They need a mixed diet, which includes crumbled biscuit or zwieback, hard-boiled egg yolk, a little fine-ground scalded meat, and ants' eggs or dried flies, all mixed together and slightly moistened. There are several kinds of package foods which can be bought ready prepared. Most of these birds will eat ripe fruit and green stuff as well. An English thrush I



once knew, brought up by hand from a nestling, used to eat almost everything on the family menu, and I remember how interested I was as a little girl to see Oliver's egg cup always placed on the table at lunch time and to watch everything that went into it—little scraps of lean meat, some crumbled bread, a morsel of fruit, spongecake, even pie and cooked vegetables, with a lettuce leaf on top. Oliver certainly thrived on his meals, for he lived to be over seventeen years old and was a great singer to the last, though almost blind from old age. He was called Oliver after Dickens's *Oliver Twist*, who always asked for more.

Birds will live for a long time. Parrots of course are proverbially long-lived; I have known many canaries fifteen and sixteen years old, and we once had a cardinal about whose age there was great discussion. This was in Italy, and he was a gift from the janitor of the house, who knew that we liked birds. The janitor, who was about thirty-five, said that the bird had been in his family since he was a child and that it had been brought from America by an uncle of his and was already an old bird then. So that by calculation our cardinal must have been close on thirty years old, and he certainly looked it. He seemed to be in a chronic state of moulting, was almost bald on the head, and had legs so twisted with rheumatism (and years of neglect in claw trimming) that he could with difficulty cling to the perch and usually slid off when sleep overtook him and spent



the night on the floor of his cage. But he sang and whistled indomitably, and his temper was atrocious. Twice a week he had a foot bath in hot water, and when you took him from the cage he would hang from your gloved finger with his beak, screaming at the top of his voice and shaking with fury. He lived with us for two years, and then died as he had lived. One morning I heard his usual whistle ending in a sudden shriek of rage, and, hastening, saw the cardinal on his back in the bottom of the cage, too weak from collapse to scream further, but still regarding me with an eye of cold spite. We tried all kinds of restoratives, but his days were finally numbered. I have never known any other bird so tame and so full of hatred.

Young crows make amusing pets, and once they are tame, as they very easily become, can be allowed their liberty about the house and garden. Crows can be brought up on most soft food, crumbled bread moistened with milk, chopped cooked meat and hard-boiled egg; later they will eat table scraps of any kind, with corn, oats, and ripe fruit. A tame crow will attach itself to a place as will a dog or cat, seldom straying, except to accompany you on walks, which he loves to do, either flying just ahead or lingering to overtake you at intervals with a sudden swoop. There is no need to clip his wings.

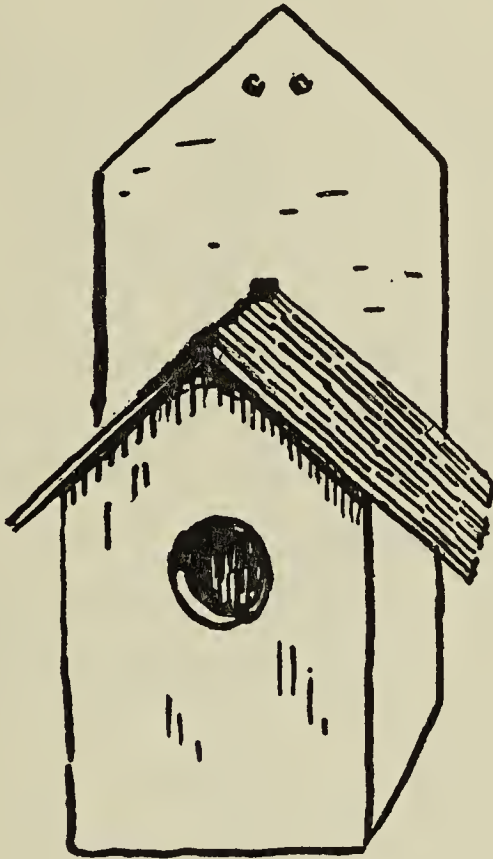
Crows are very mischievous and like to play tricks, especially in hiding small objects. They will watch everything

you do with great gravity, and offer to help. Gardening is their great joy, but they are apt to be less of a help than a hindrance, except in snatching chance worms. Do not have a tame crow unless you are living in the country, and are sure of being able to keep it. Tame crows, turned adrift, are nearly always set upon and attacked by their own kind if they try to rejoin them, and are also likely to be shot by some zealous farmer in mistake for a wild bird.

Seagulls have occasionally been tamed, but I have only known personally of one, which was picked up with an injured wing and cared for during one fall and winter. He became fairly tame and would take fish from one's hand, but he was so bad-tempered and crotchety that when spring came and his wing was strong enough to enable him to fly once more, his departure was quite a relief to the family.

Nearly every country home has its tame wrens which, like robins, return year after year to nest in or near the same spot. Wrens seem to look upon a house as designed specially for their convenience, and will choose, preferably, some corner directly in the line of passage, like a doorway or ground-floor window ledge where, once settled, they defy you to disturb or eject them. Wrens need no coaxing to become familiar. They will build a nest and bring up their brood right under your eyes, scold and chatter all day long as you pass to and fro near them, and even, secure in your

protection, tease and bully the household cat till his life is misery and he has to walk the other way to avoid them. If you nail a small bird box on your doorpost wrens will use it gladly, and one of their favorite spots is the space



*A Box for Wrens*

between a closed shutter and the window glass, where they can squeeze in and out between the slats. A pair of wrens that built inside our parlor shutters one summer did not seem to mind at all that their nest, clearly visible from inside through the window pane, was within a few inches of

one's head as one sat reading or writing in the room, and lit up brightly each evening by the lamplight.

Wrens will bring up two broods a year in the same nest with only a few days' interval for the necessary house repairs.

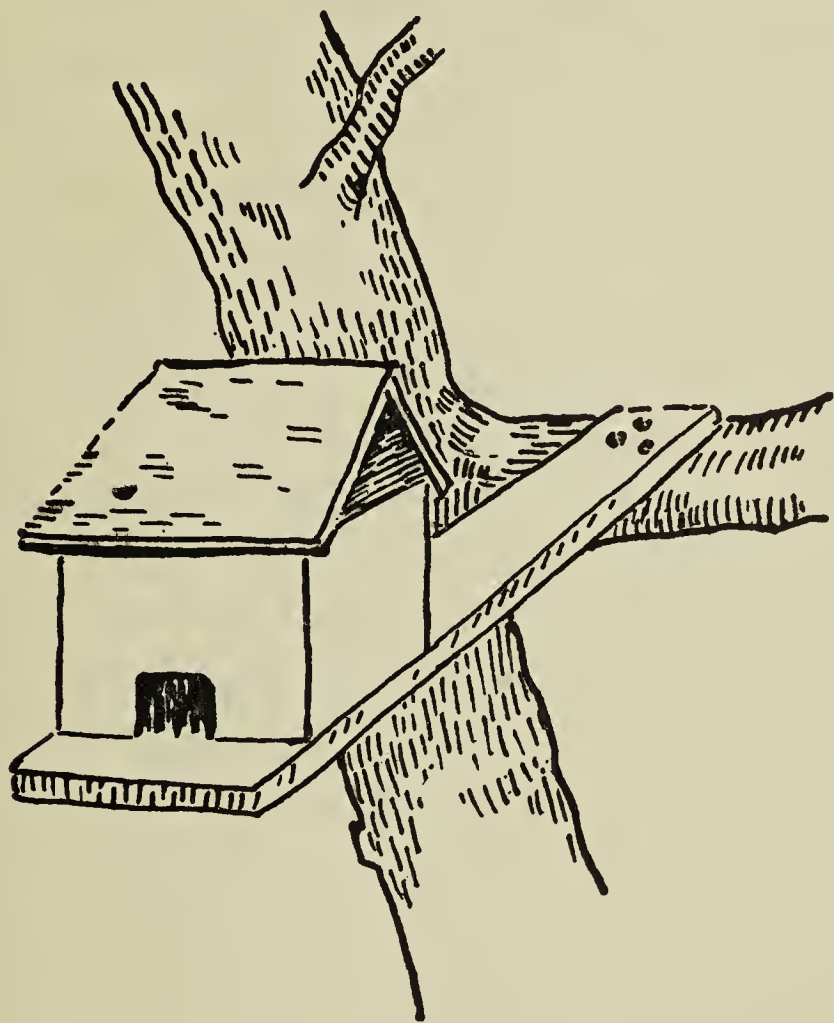
All wild birds love to have a bath provided for them and do not particularly care whether it is ornamental or not so long as it is shallow and large enough to splash in, and set in some place where they can have free access to it from all directions. Birds prefer an open spot for their bathing, where they can keep an eye on everything around them and are not liable to be taken by surprise. The bath should be raised from the ground, so that its patrons can take flight instantly and easily at any alarm, and if it has not a broad enough rim for easy foothold, set a sloping piece of wood with one end in the water, which they can use for a bathing board.

Bird houses are very easy to make, and though the little gayly painted chalets and cottages one sees are amusing and ornamental, the simplest are really the best, and much preferred by the birds themselves. In fact, they would rather their little house were not painted at all, unless with some quiet tone to protect it from the weather.

The simplest and best bird house, which anyone can make in a very little time, is built by taking a small wooden box, cutting a two-inch square hole in one end, and then



nailing it upside down on a piece of board of the same width as the box itself, placing it so that the board projects three inches in front of the entrance hole to make a ledge



*A Bird House*

perching, and about a foot and a half at the back. This longer end is to be nailed to the chosen bough or crotch so that your bird house will stand well out from the tree trunk. If you do not like the flat top, you can nail on two

more pieces of wood to make a peaked roof, which will give a further small attic space underneath for nesting, and the best ornamentation is to cover roof and sides with flat pieces of bark—birchbark if you can get it, or else such loose bark as you can pick up in almost any woodpile—and fasten it on with tacks or brads. The board itself can be painted dull green or grey to match the branch.

The advantage of this house is that by standing out a little way from the tree it gives good protection from enemies, as the entrance is at the front, and no cat can get at it from behind. If there are squirrels near, you can protect the house further by taking a piece of small-mesh wire netting and nailing it across the board, so that it projects about six inches either side and makes a screen, between the bird house and the tree, which no small animal can pass.

In setting a bird house on a post no such precautions are needed, but you must remember that in providing houses for your bird guests such homes must be placed very safely and not in any position where they would be in more danger than the average nesting spot chosen by the bird itself.

Robins like something in the shape of a platform or ledge as a foundation for their nest. They will make use of a little shelf set high up under the roof of your porch or in any place where it will be sheltered from above and where they feel safe from disturbance. Their nest is rather shallow, resting on a flat foundation. The nest of the wren

on the contrary, is a rather deep affair, pocket-shaped; so in planning a bird house for them, have it deep and snug, with a little round entrance hole near the top. It can be cylindrical or square, as you like; the square shape is easy to make out of bits of thin wood six inches wide, roofed with a couple of shingles. I have seen two such boxes nailed either side of a front doorway at about the height of a person's head, in which two pairs of wrens nested happily year after year.

Winter and early spring are the times when natural food is most scarce and when such birds as winter over or stop for a short time in passage most appreciate being fed. It is best to feed birds from an upper window, either on a porch roof or on a wide board fastened just below the outside window sill, rather than on the ground. Feed them bread crumbs, grain, or seed, also some scraps of shredded beef suet or a little chopped cooked meat, as not all your visitors are seed eaters. A lump of beef suet hung in a net from a tree branch or a fresh coconut sawed in half and hung by wires through holes bored in the edge of the shell will please a good many hungry guests, and can be left out for them all winter.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE AQUARIUM

In choosing an aquarium, the first thing to remember is that fishes, or any other aquatic creatures, need air almost as much as they need water. They do not use it in the same way—that is, not directly—but its presence is very necessary to them. If you think of any natural body of water that you know of, like a small pond or brook, you will realize at once that the air surface, or top of the water, is usually very large in proportion to the depth. It is through this surface of the water that the air is absorbed both by the fishes and by the plants.

The usual goldfish globe, for this reason, is of no use. Fish will live more healthily in an ordinary dishpan than in many of the fancy receptacles designed for them. Whatever shape your tank is, it must have straight sides, so that the open top is quite as large as the base. Whether it is square or round makes not much difference, but the larger it is the easier it will be to keep in proper condition.

The tank should stand where it gets light, but not direct



## THE AQUARIUM

sunlight throughout the day. Close to a north or east window is the best place. Light is necessary for the water plants, and a little sunlight will help their growth, but it must never be strong, nor much of it.

Do not think you can rush out and get your tank, your goldfish and perhaps a water weed or two and start your aquarium right away, at least with any success. Aquariums are apt to suffer from too much haste in the beginning, as well as too much misguided enthusiasm later on. A little preparation is necessary if you want good results. The right way is to get your tank well established first, and add your inhabitants by degrees.

The bottom of the tank should be covered with sand, gravel, or fine pebbles about two inches deep, and these must first be thoroughly washed to get rid of any dirt or impurities. A good plan is to stand the tank under a faucet with just enough water running to wash the sand well, turning it from time to time, and keep it running for several hours. When it is quite clean, empty the water and arrange your pebbles as you want them, sloping them a little towards one end or corner.

The next question concerns water plants. These are a necessity, not for your fish to eat, but because, in growing, they give off oxygen, which the fish need for existence. Unless you can have continual running water, fish cannot live without plant life in the same tank. There are many

varieties of plants to choose from, some very beautiful, and an aquarium dealer usually stocks several kinds. If you like you can get your own plants from a brook or pond, but in choosing, always remember the size of your tank and get something of not too rank growth. The plants should be well washed and rooted directly in the sand, with a large pebble to keep them in place or else weighted down with a little strip of lead, until they can take root hold. Use a little care and thought in arrangement, and, before planting, pick off all dead or decaying sprays. If you use weeds you have bought, it is best to cut off some of the stem, leaving about three inches of the top for planting. These should strike root and begin to grow after a few days, but if a plant turns brown and slimy and refuses to root, it must be removed and another set in its place.

Now fill the tank carefully with water, using a siphon if possible, or else dipping the water in slowly, to about three inches from the top, and let it stand two or three days to settle, and for the plants to establish themselves before you put in your fish. Pond or brook water is the best to use, or else clean rain water. "City water" can be used and often is, used, but it is not so good, as it is already filtered and so contains very little on which your plants can feed.

Keep your tank as natural in appearance as possible. It is far prettier with simple pebbles and water weeds than

with any fancy rockwork, ruined castle, or floating china man that the dealers may try to tempt you to buy, and which only look out of place and take up space that is needed by the fish.

The usual beginner's trouble is overstocking. There is a rule about this, which allows two or three small goldfish for each gallon of water. A gallon is just four quarts, so, if you measure the content of your tank before beginning, which should be quite easy to do, you will have a clear idea of how many fish you may safely keep in it. If you begin by putting in three small fish, a couple of snails and, perhaps, a tadpole, you can afterward add to your stock gradually if everything seems all right. Snails—small ones—are very useful. They act as scavengers and will eat any decaying vegetation or tiny fragments of food that may be left over, and they also help to keep down that greenish growth which appears sometimes on the sides of the tank. This is fostered by too much light or by direct sunlight. It can be removed by rubbing the glass with a bit of cotton at the end of a stick, but a little of it does no harm and need not cause worry. If your tank stands before a window, it is well to let this growth remain on the side nearest the light, as a screen, unless it becomes too dense.

A glass cover will keep dust from the surface of the water. Take four small corks, notch them so they will fit at the edge of the tank and rest the glass on these, so that



it is raised about half an inch to allow free air passage. If your tank is so shaped that the corks will not fit, lay two thin strips of wood across and support the cover on these.

If your plants are thriving properly, it should not be necessary to change the water in the aquarium at all, once it is established. All you need do is to add a little from time to time, as it evaporates. Instead of changing it you can aerate the water occasionally by taking up a little at a time in a spoon or dipper and letting it fall back gently, in drops. An aquarium should be disturbed as little as possible. Watch your plants. If they are spindling give them more light and a little sunshine daily; if they seem to be growing too rank and bushy the light must be screened. Any decayed bits of vegetation or scraps of uneaten food should be removed very carefully with a small dip net made of cheese cloth.

If your fish begin coming to the surface to gasp, it is a sign of trouble. Either there is not enough plant life to keep the water in proper condition, or the water has become overheated, or, most probably, you have more fish than the tank will support. Try taking one or more of the fish out, using a dip net to catch them in, and put them in another vessel, preferably something shallow in which they can get plenty of air. Meantime, aerate the water in the tank, as described. Just one fish too many will upset the



whole balance of the aquarium and make trouble for everything in it.

If one of your fishes seems sick remove it at once to a separate bowl, and watch the tank carefully for some days. If others sicken or die, it may be necessary to clean the whole tank and start again. A dead fish must be removed at once, and, in this case, it is well to take all your fish out and give them an antiseptic bath. Dissolve one crystal of permanganate of potash in a bowl of clean water, just enough to color the water faintly pink, but not more, and let your fish stay in this for fifteen or twenty minutes. During this time you can examine the tank thoroughly and remove any possible decaying substance before you put the fish back again.

Never put your fingers into the water, but use a small dip net or a long thin stick for any rearranging necessary. A piece of glass tubing is very useful with which to remove food fragments. By keeping one finger over the upper end and then lifting it just for a second, water will be sucked up into the tube together with the fragment you want to remove. If you should have to empty the tank, use a glass or rubber siphon tube. You need not suck on a siphon tube to start it. Fill the tube completely with water, then completely stop both ends and plunge one end into the tank. For goldfish, the best thing is to buy some good package food from a dealer. Feed them only every second or third

day, and sprinkle in only as much as they will eat at one time. Goldfish are very greedy and they must not be overfed. They will eat dried ants' eggs as well as the prepared food. Don't give them bread crumbs or cake; bread fragments will sour the water and cause trouble. Fish will become quite tame, and learn to rise to the surface at once when food is expected.

A small tadpole or newt may be kept in the tank with your fish. Tadpoles eat water weeds as well as other food. Frogs, large water beetles, turtles, or crayfish must not be kept in a tank with fish. All these creatures are predators and will attack and devour other living things smaller or weaker than themselves.

Newts are easily caught and kept, and are quite amusing. They will eat raw shredded meat, fish, worms, and grubs. Their tank will need a wire-gauze cover, as newts have a tiresome habit of climbing out of almost anything into which you put them, and once on the floor they will crawl away into some remote corner where you may not find them before it is too late. Newts lead a varied existence; a part of their life is spent on land, and the little brown or red lizard-shaped creatures you find under stones or in damp woods are really newts, during the land stage of their career. When they return to a watery life, their color changes to green or greenish black. In ponds, newts like to crawl to the shallow edges where the water is warm, and in a

aquarium they will spend much of their time clinging to the water weed or floating with their heads just below the surface.

Besides goldfish, which are the hardiest to keep, there are many very beautiful little fishes bred and sold for aquariums. Most of these are tropical fish and need rather special care and water kept at an even, warm temperature the year round. With care, it is possible to keep them in an ordinary living room where the temperature does not drop at night, and in cold weather their tank can be stood on a table near a radiator. As their coloring is beautiful and their habits interesting and varied, it is well worth the trouble if you care to experiment with them, after some little experience of keeping hardier fishes first. The dealer will tell you the right prepared food to use for each kind. Aquarium fishes should never be put directly into cold water, and, in adding water to your tank be sure that it is the same temperature as that already in it, or of the room itself.

If you have the luck to live near a brook or pond it is very interesting to stock your aquarium with such small fish and other creatures as you can catch with a long-handled dip net. Besides minnows, sticklebacks, small perch, and catfish, you will find tiny eels, snails, and caddis worms—those queer little creatures which build themselves little tube-shaped protective house of straws or tiny sticks,



in which they crawl about over the bottom of the stream. Some of the small native fish you may find are rather savage, sticklebacks especially so; so you must watch out for possible fighting if you put them together, and if you want to keep a goldfish among them, let it be considerably larger than the wild fish.

All the water plants you need you can get from the same source, and prettier ones than you may find at the dealer's store. Dredge your sand and pebbles from the bottom of the brook, as well. In arranging the tank remember that wild fishes, more than goldfish, like nooks and corners to hide in, and these can be made by piling one or two flattish stones edgewise so as to leave a space between. The more your tank resembles the natural brook bed, with its depressions and ledges, the better. If you are careful to keep the right balance of plant and animal life, this aquarium will succeed as well as any other, will give you even more satisfaction, and the water should not need changing any oftener.



## CHAPTER X

### LAND-AND-WATER PETS

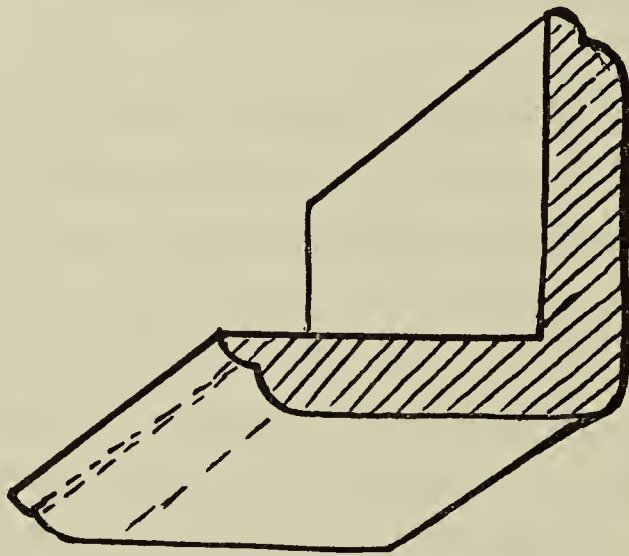
Even more amusing to my mind than an aquarium is a terrarium, to give it its long name; a glass case in which you can keep toads, lizards, salamanders, and such small creatures as need both water and dry ground. Any fern case or discarded aquarium tank will do for this but it is quite easy to build one for yourself, as it need not, in fact should be watertight.

If you make it yourself, get first of all a piece of wood—three-quarter-inch board is best and it should be free from motholes—of the size and width you want your case. This for the bottom. Fifteen by nine inches is a good size, if you have space for it, for it isn't a thing you want to move about much, and it will need to stand near a window where it will get sufficient warmth and be in no danger of freezing at night, and where it will get sun during some part of the day, preferably the morning. A south window is excellent during the winter. If at any time the sun is too strong, you can always shade the case by slipping a paper

behind it. So you had better arrange where you are going to place it before deciding on the exact size.

Bore five or six holes with a largish gimlet at one end of the board, fairly close together, and char them well with a red-hot wire—an old ice pick is better, if you can get one. Get four small wooden knobs and screw them firmly into the four corners for feet, to raise it a little, or four small cotton spools with screws run through will do just as well. When you have done this it should stand quite level.

From any lumber yard you can buy a few feet of angle molding, the kind that is used for finishing edges; in section it looks like this:



*An Angle of Molding*

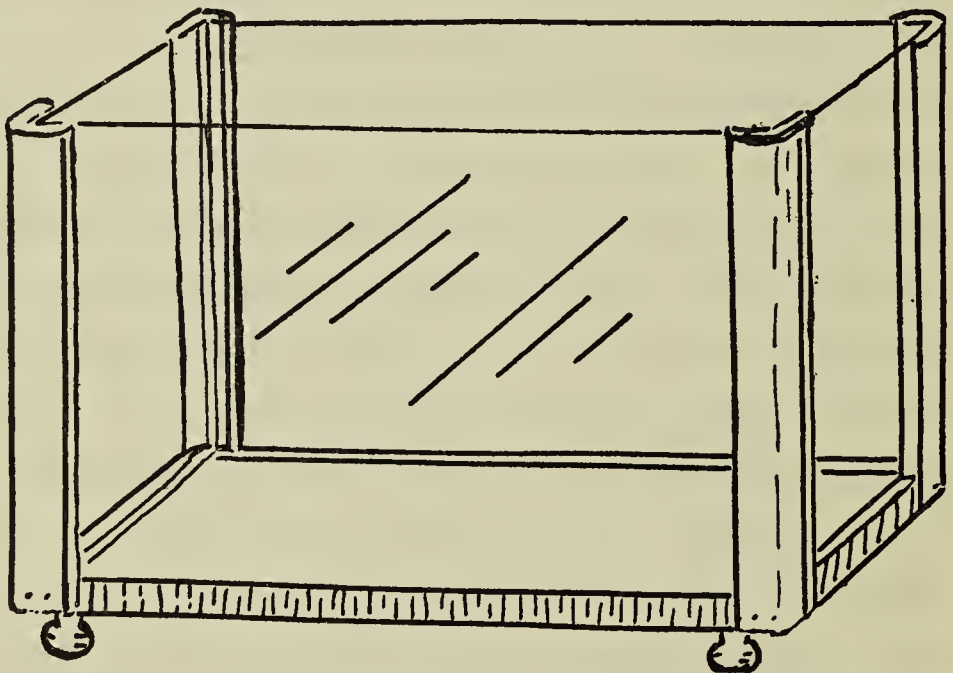
Also some plain half-inch flat beading. Four feet of each

will be enough, and it costs a few cents a foot. You will need four pieces of the angle molding each ten inches long, which you can cut yourself. These are for the corner supports. With fine wire nails; fasten them securely to the four corners of your bottom board, on the outside, upright but naturally not on the side where you screwed the knobs. It should now look like a table with four legs in the air, and the legs must be quite firm, not wobbly.

Now take the inside measure for your four glass sides. They should be the same width as the height of your corner posts, measured on the inside, but allow one-quarter inch less than the length, so they will fit easily. If your side length is fourteen and a half inches, you want the glass fourteen and a quarter inches, also; and allow the same variation for the end pieces. Have a glazier cut them for you and see that he cuts them exact. Ordinary window glass will do.

Cut two pieces of the narrow beading, each a couple of inches shorter than the length of your case, and two for the ends the same way. Put one of the glass sides in and, holding it in place upright, lay your bit of beading inside flat on the bottom board, close against the glass; mark the position, remove the glass and fasten the beading down with wire brads. Do this on all four sides, and then when you slip your glass in, the beading should hold it in place at the bottom. The top has still to be fixed. This can be

done with thin brads or those little triangular glazier's points, driven into the wood of the corner posts on the inside, but that is a delicate job to do without cracking the glass. Another way is to take tiny brass screw eyes, such as are used at the back of picture frames, and as thin as you can get them. If the glass was cut right, there should be



*The Case Completed*

just space enough where the edges nearly meet at the corners to put a screw eye between, running through into the corner post on the inside. Tighten it till it just touches and holds both edges of glass, but no more. You can add a very little putty, if you like, and then stain your wood work green or brown. Before putting in the glass, it is



well to bind the top edge with a narrow strip of gummed paper.

The whole thing now should be quite firm, but remember to lift it, when you have to, from the bottom. The last thing needed is a cover, which you can make from a bit of ordinary black metal mosquito screen, with the edges bent down so that it will fit over and keep in place.

All this done—I hope successfully—the more interesting part begins. There is a lot of fun in planning a real miniature landscape garden for your small pets to live in, which will keep green and pretty all winter.

Begin by laying some pebbles and coarse sand on the bottom, mixed with leaf mold, about an inch deep. For the pool, use a small bowl or deep flower-pot saucer, setting it flat on the bottom and filling in round it. Now for planting. Almost any of the small native ferns will do well, and most of the coarser-growing mosses, such as you find near brook side. Choose small and compact ferns, taking them up in little tufts just as they grow. Set them close, but without overcrowding, and remember to put in at least one flatish stone for your pets to sun themselves on, near the pool. They do not want to live entirely in a jungle. Tiny sedums will grow well in the case, among the stones. The soil should be kept moist but not wet. Tepid water used in an ordinary fly sprayer is good for sprinkling the leaves, which should be done every other day. When you water

thoroughly, once a week or oftener, as required, leave the case tilted very slightly for a few minutes and the surplus water will drain off through the holes you bored into the saucer.

Small toads will enjoy life here; so will a frog, if you can find one not too large and active, or the little salamanders, or red efts, the color of red-hot iron, which you find frequently crawling about in the woods after rain. Toads are the most amusing, as they get quite tame. Three that I kept through one winter—they were about as big as a dime when I first picked them up, but grew quite a little mostly in girth—grew tame enough to feed from my hand or sit quietly on my finger when picked up, and at feeding time would come scrambling from their holes and sit round the breakfast table—a flat stone—ready to fight for their food.

Toads will soon settle down, finding each a favorite corner where it will dig itself in and sleep during the coldest weather, or on dull days. When the sun slants into the fernery, you will see them slowly hoist themselves out, like little fat old gentlemen, to sit and bask in the warmth. Their gold-spectacled eyes and deliberate movements are most amusing. No two are marked exactly alike so you can always tell them apart.

Toads in their wild state live largely on flies, but, as a toad has been observed to catch something like three hun-

hundred flies in less than half an hour, you will probably find you can't compete at that game well enough to keep him fed. In captivity they will do very well on tiny shreds of raw meat that has been ground through the chopping machine. ("Hamburger," by the way, is an invaluable stand-by with most non-vegetarian pets.) Let them get really hungry first—a week without food will not hurt them—then take a long flexible broom straw, put a shred of meat on the end of it, and move it gently to and fro till it catches their eye, as toads hunt by sight, not by smell. This may take some patience in the beginning, but after a while they will make a snap at it, and once they get used to this new game, you will have no difficulty in feeding them. They will very soon learn to associate the broom straw with food, and will come hopping up as soon as they see it moving. Later you can drop the scraps of meat on a stone before them, and move it with the tip of the straw or by blowing gently, till they snap at it. Toads move incredibly quickly when they feed. It takes a very sharp eye to see the tongue flash out and in again. They are also greedy, and it's very funny to watch two of them darting for the same mouthful at once, and fighting over which gets it first. One of my baby toads was so much greedier than his companions that I often had to chase him off so that they could each have a fair chance. Twice a week is often enough to feed them, and they should take as much food as they want. With



very little trouble, your toads should keep you amused all winter and when spring comes, if you get tired of them, you can turn them loose again where they came from.

Sometimes, if you are lucky, on the trunk of an old apple tree, or even on the grass after rain, you may find a small greyish toad with little knobs on the ends of his toes. This is a tree toad, and the knobs are tiny suckers by which he clings to the bark of the tree. He, too, will do well in your terrarium, and will chirp for you before rain. Tree toads can change their shade, though not their color, from dark mottled grey to almost white, according to their background, so as to be invisible against the bark. After I had found one by chance, I later found others by running my hand gently over the bark of orchard trees till I could feel something cold, which was the toad. Small green tree frogs sometimes may be bought at an aquarium dealer. They are very pretty and, though not so hardy as the grey tree toad, are not difficult to keep. For either of these, you should fix a bit of old branch, with the bark on, big enough for them to sit on comfortably, and mind that your gauze cover fits well, or they will climb out up the glass.

Lizards and frogs may be fed in the same way as toads: give flies, soft grubs, or small worms, too, if you can get them; but shredded raw meat is often the most convenient. All these creatures, like snakes, are accustomed to living prey, so they will snap at anything when they



See it moving. Remember to have all such pets as you keep together of much the same size. Don't try to keep a large frog or lizard with small toads, and never put a snake in with anything else alive.

Lizards and snakes like dryer surroundings than do toads. Keep pebbles or sand in the case, a saucer of water always, a tree branch to climb on, and arrange some covered nook which they can crawl into for hiding. Both snakes and lizards like warmth and some sunshine. Snakes can be induced to eat raw meat quite easily, contrary to common belief; they are also fond of milk. They should always have clean drinking water handy, but only need feeding once a week. Again, be sure the top of your box or case fits well and is of close mesh; a small snake will squeeze out of almost any crevice and then you may have a hard job hunting for him, for snakes love to get into queer hiding places. They will flatten themselves against a picture frame, coil among the flowers in a vase, or curl up under someone's pillow.

In picking up a snake, always grasp it close up behind the head, so that it has no space to turn and bite you. A tame snake is most unlikely to bite, but many of the ordinary harmless ones will, in the wild state, when disturbed or handled. Poisonous snakes, as you know, transmit the poison through two fangs in the upper jaw, nor can they transmit it in any other way, by spitting or darting

their tongues out, as ignorant people may sometime tell you. Harmless snakes, like garter snakes and grass snakes, have, of course, no fangs, but they do have a row of quite sharp little teeth which they use instead to catch their prey, and which, though tiny, can break the skin and make a raking scratch; and while there is no cause whatever for alarm in being bitten by one, a snake's bite is apt to be sudden and rather startling.

Tortoises—perhaps you call them all “turtles”—are best as garden pets, though I've kept them indoors. With four boards and a few nails you can easily contrive a pen for them. It should be roomy, as tortoises are great travelers and it is cruelty to keep a grown tortoise cooped up in a small space. They like a sunny spot, with some shade as well; dry earth to dig in; and a shallow pan of clean drinking water, which should be sunk level with the ground so they can get at it easily.

The ordinary black tortoise that you find in hay fields or meadows, with some dull yellow marking but no regular spots, is chiefly vegetarian. This tortoise is flattish in shape, and grows to a fair size. I have known some of the older ones to snap quite fiercely when they were first caught, so be prepared. They will eat most tender green stuff, but particularly lettuce and dandelion. Cabbage they don't care for. Tortoises appear to select their food by smell, and

choose it with great care and deliberation. Being so long-lived, they probably don't feel the need to hurry about anything. Keep green stuff within reach and renew it frequently: tortoises are very choosy, and will not touch soiled or wilted green stuff, nor any tough or coarse-growing leaves. Their jaws, not oversharpe, are only adapted to cut young and tender leafage. All tortoises drink a good deal. This tortoise will also drink milk and enjoys bread soaked in milk occasionally, also a ripe strawberry or a piece of banana.

The box tortoise is smaller, more compact in shape, and the shell more nearly dome-shaped. You can tell it easily because the undershell is hinged in the middle, so the animal can not only draw its head and legs in, but also close its shell completely. These tortoises are far prettier than the others. They are beautifully mottled and range in color from pale yellow to bright orange-red, patterned with black. You rarely find two alike in color or marking. If you take the trouble to sponge their shells thoroughly with water and then rub them with a little olive oil on a soft rag, you will be surprised to find how handsome they are, and your tortoises won't object at all to the process. They are largely insect-eating, and will need scraps of raw meat, worms, etc., in addition to green stuff. The little yellow-spotted water tortoises that you find in shallow ditches and swampy meadows are also carnivorous. They need dry



ground as well as water. Both land and water tortoises hibernate in winter, so turn yours loose in the fall in plenty of time for them to dig themselves in somewhere, unless you have a greenhouse where they can sleep without danger from frost.

Small tortoises can be kept as indoor pets in a box or case. While they are young, the shell is still soft and leathery; so be careful in handling them. The pretty little bright-green turtles that you buy from aquarium dealers are mostly from tropical or fairly hot climates. They are out of place in the ordinary aquarium and should be kept by themselves. They need a fairly warm temperature. They must have water, but also a space of earth or sand on which to crawl. They are carnivorous, and will eat shredded meat, chopped clams, or raw fish. Some feed in the water, some on shore, so you must find out their likings by experiment.

If your tank is square, take a narrow slip of wood that will just fit across the bottom and set it so as to make a division, leaving one side twice as large as the other. Fill the larger part with pebbles or sand to the level of the wood; the other is for water. The wood will hold the pebbles in place, making a sloping beach up which the turtles can crawl easily. They like a small floating raft, also. You can give them a swim occasionally in a large tub or pan of tepid water; never put them directly into cold water.



Baby alligators make odd and amusing pets, but it is useless to try to keep them alive except under proper conditions. The first essential in their care is warmth. Most of the young alligators brought away from their native haunts die indirectly from chill. Both air and water must be kept at a temperature of at least seventy-five degrees; otherwise they will not feed and so gradually starve to death. A baby alligator can be kept most of the time in an ordinary fish tank, but the tank must be large enough to allow the baby to move about freely, as it is an active creature when healthy. There should be the same arrangement as for turtles. It needs a smooth dry place to crawl and lie on, as well as some water. The glass sides of the tank give good protection from draught. Throughout the cold weather, it should stand on a shelf raised a couple of inches above a radiator or steam-pipe—and one that can be relied on for steady service—and where it can also get as much sun as possible during the day. Alligators love sunlight and thrive in it. If the temperature is liable to drop at night, lay a cover over the tank, allowing a chink for air space. As you need only keep an inch or so of water in it, this will soon evaporate, so it needs watching. When you add fresh water, warm it first. Alligators are not crazy about cleanliness: they rather like muddy water, but you should clean the tank once a week.

When you first get a baby alligator it will probably be

chilled, and may not have been fed for some time. Before you attempt to feed it, put it into a deep pan with an inch or so of water, quite warm to the touch but not hot, in it. Let him swim around in that for some minutes till he is thoroughly warmed up. If he then begins to get lively, open his mouth, or snap at your finger, he is ready to feed. Put a shred of raw meat or fish on a broom straw, hold it near him, or tap his nose with it gently, and he'll probably take it. Don't give more than three or four very tiny scraps the first time, and moisten them first in the warm water. Later he can have more, and after you once get him to eat, feed him regularly every three days. You can give finely shredded meat or chopped liver, raw clam or fish in tiny slivers, or small worms. Fish or clam is best.

If after some time he still refuses obstinately to eat, you can then open his jaws and put in a small shred of food as far back as possible, to induce him to swallow, and then see if he will take more of his own free will; but hand feeding is no use as a regular practice, and if he refuses to eat for himself after this, there is nothing much to do about it. Always put him in the warmed water before feeding, and let him lie in it awhile after. The advantage of not feeding him in the tank is that, not being used to receiving food while there, he will be less likely to snap when you pick him up or handle him.

In deep water, alligators like to float just near the sur-

ce, looking like dead things, with just their eyes and nostrils above water, perfectly motionless. They have a curious sort of trap-door arrangement in their throat which can close to prevent water being swallowed. If you ever have occasion to open an alligator's mouth, you might think he has no throat at all, but it is there, all right. The curved line of the jaws, when closed, gives the expression of a rather engaging smile, but this is not to be relied upon.

Even baby alligators have a bad reputation for biting. From my own experience I would say they are not naturally vicious, but when hungry they will snap at anything, including your finger. One small alligator, Claud, I have kept now for over a year but have never been bitten by him except accidentally when feeding from my fingers. He is quite tame and can be handled freely. A ten- or twelve-inch alligator has such tiny teeth that he cannot inflict a serious bite, but he may hang onto your finger and not be easy to shake off. They have a funny little bark which they emit when excited or threatened, and also when hungry. Claud always begins to bark wildly when put into the wash-bow at feeding time. They are very spunky little things, and it is funny to see a tiny alligator square up and try to frighten you, with his tail swishing and his ridiculous pink mouth wide open. But don't tease him, though it's a great temptation.



Baby alligators are delicate; you must be careful in handling them, and never let them drop.

As often as possible, let your alligator have a good swim for exercise in the bathtub or washtub, with tepid water.

Through the heat of summer, you can keep him outdoors in a shallow roomy box with wire netting over it. Have a pan of water either sunk or banked with earth around the edge, and there should be earth or sand in the box. If you care to plant ferns and green things, he will enjoy a miniature jungle to crawl in, also a raft in the swimming pool to bask on or dive under; and if you can find enough worms or chopped fish for him, life will be perfectly grand. Alligators are more active in summer and like more freedom; they eat oftener, too. Let the box stand in a sunny spot, keep it well sprinkled, and have a cover handy ready to lay over it on chilly days and during heavy showers. As the evenings grow cool, you must give extra protection by sundown, and bring your pet indoors at night before there is any danger of early frost.

An alligator grows very slowly in captivity, so you will be able to enjoy his company for some time before he gets big enough to be a serious problem, and then you can present him to the nearest zoo or a large aquarium.





















*The rat is like a big brother of the mouse.*

© Brown Bros.





*Pamela Bianco's dog.*





© Underwood & Underwood.

*Siamese cats.*

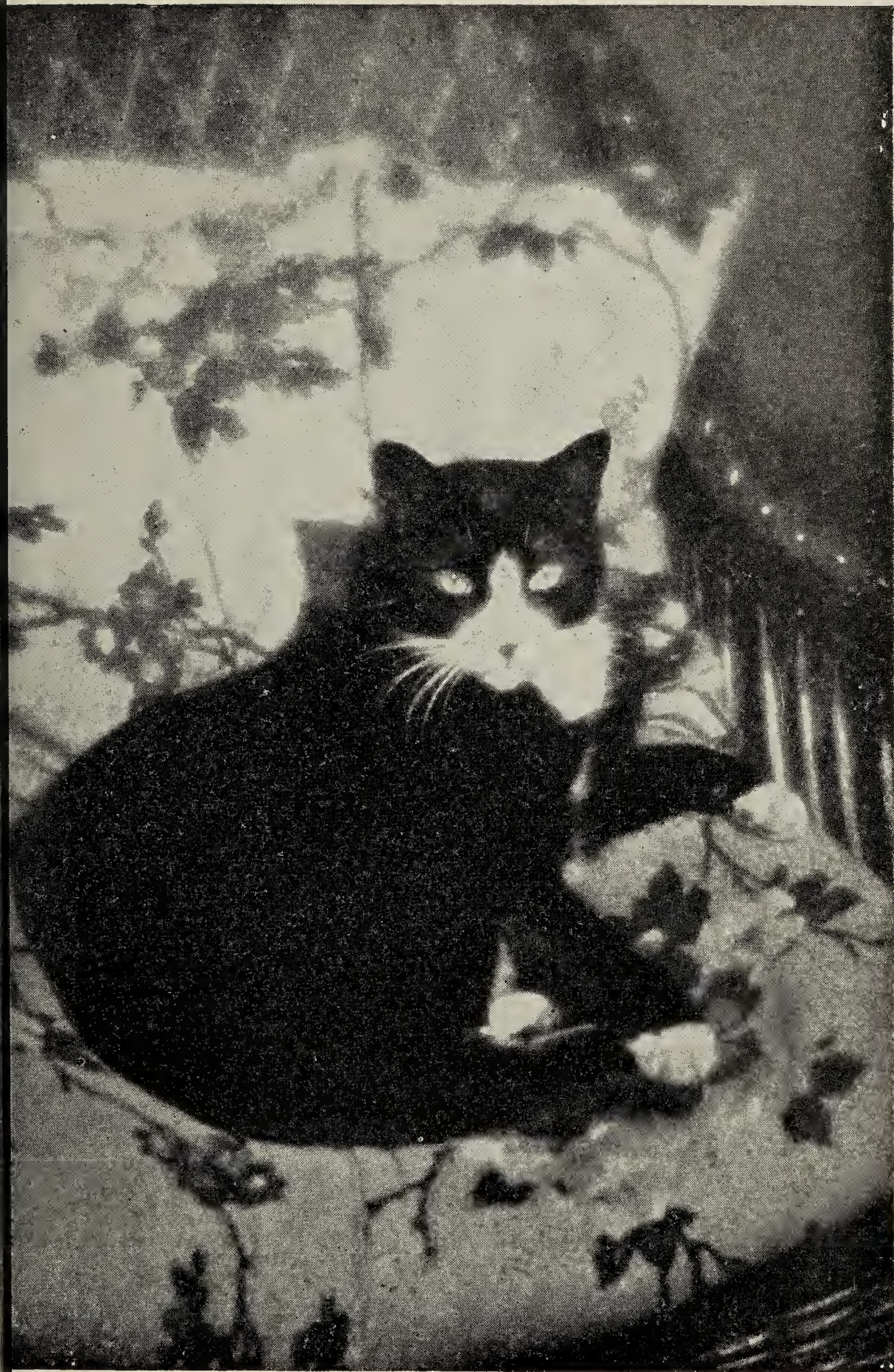




© Underwood & Underwood

*Persians are essentially house pets.*





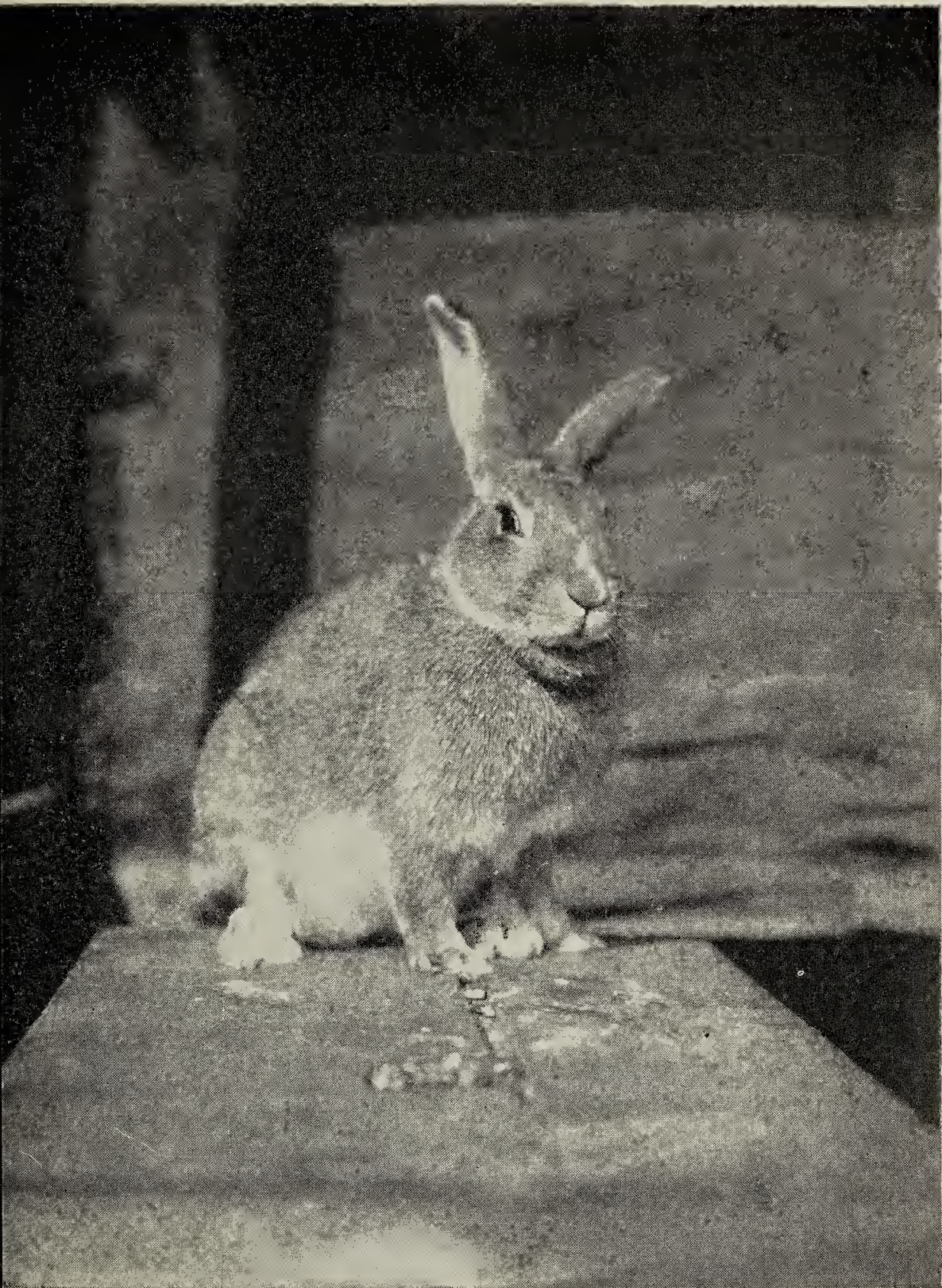
© Constance Lindsay Skinner.

*Cats like to be comfortable.*





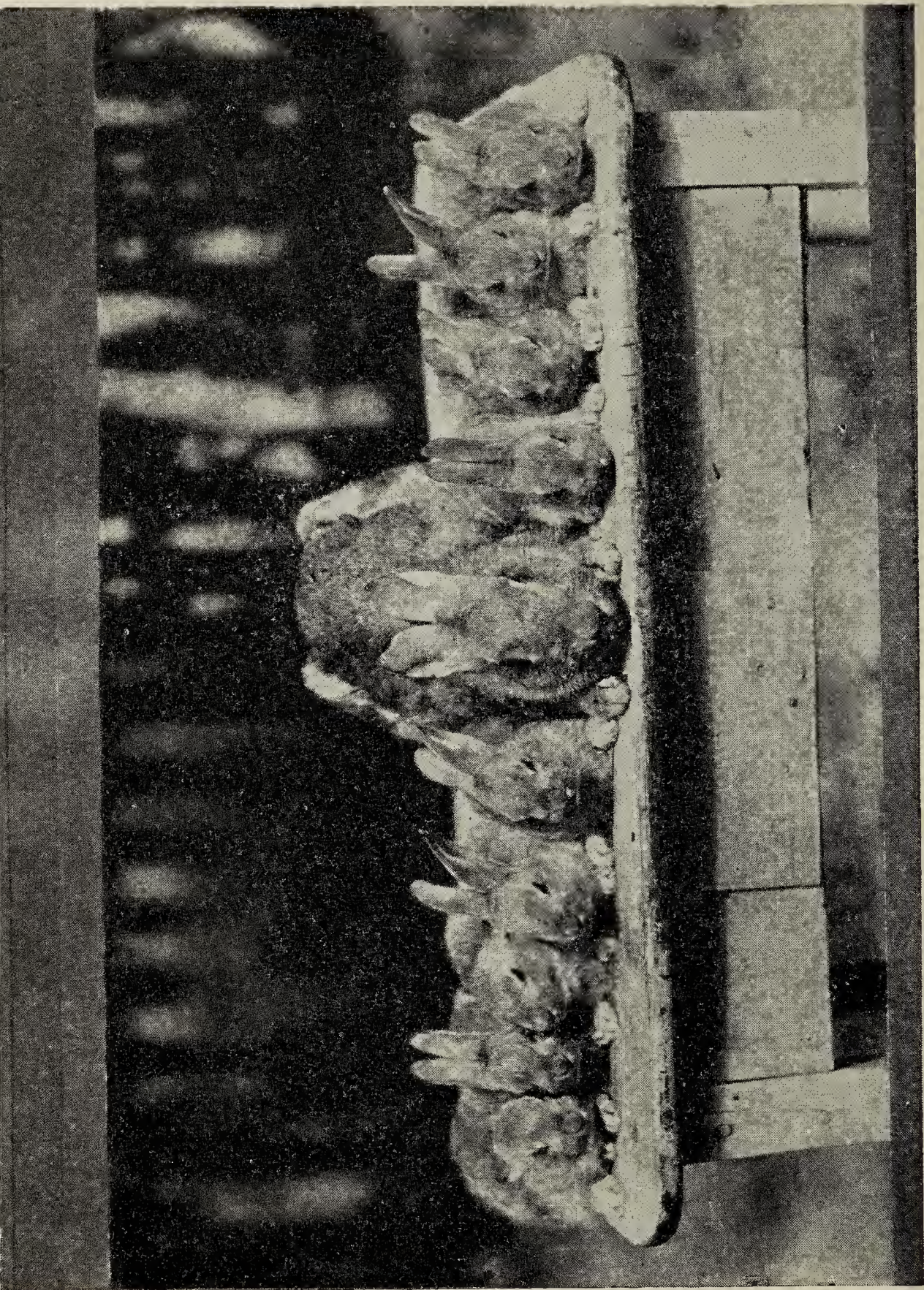




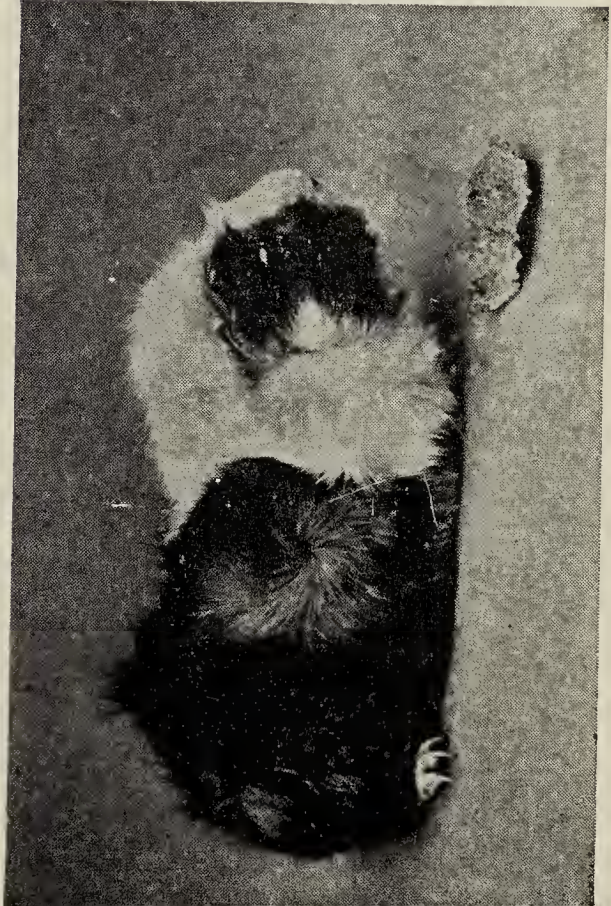
© Brown Bros.

*Rabbits have definite personalities.*









© Brown Bros.

*The guinea pigs at the top are Peruvian, the others Abyssinian.*









© Louise Birt Baynes.

*Young crows make amusing pets.*









© Underwood & Underwood.

*Two young robins.*









© N. Y. Zoological Society.

*Your tank must have straight sides.*









*Toads will soon settle down.*









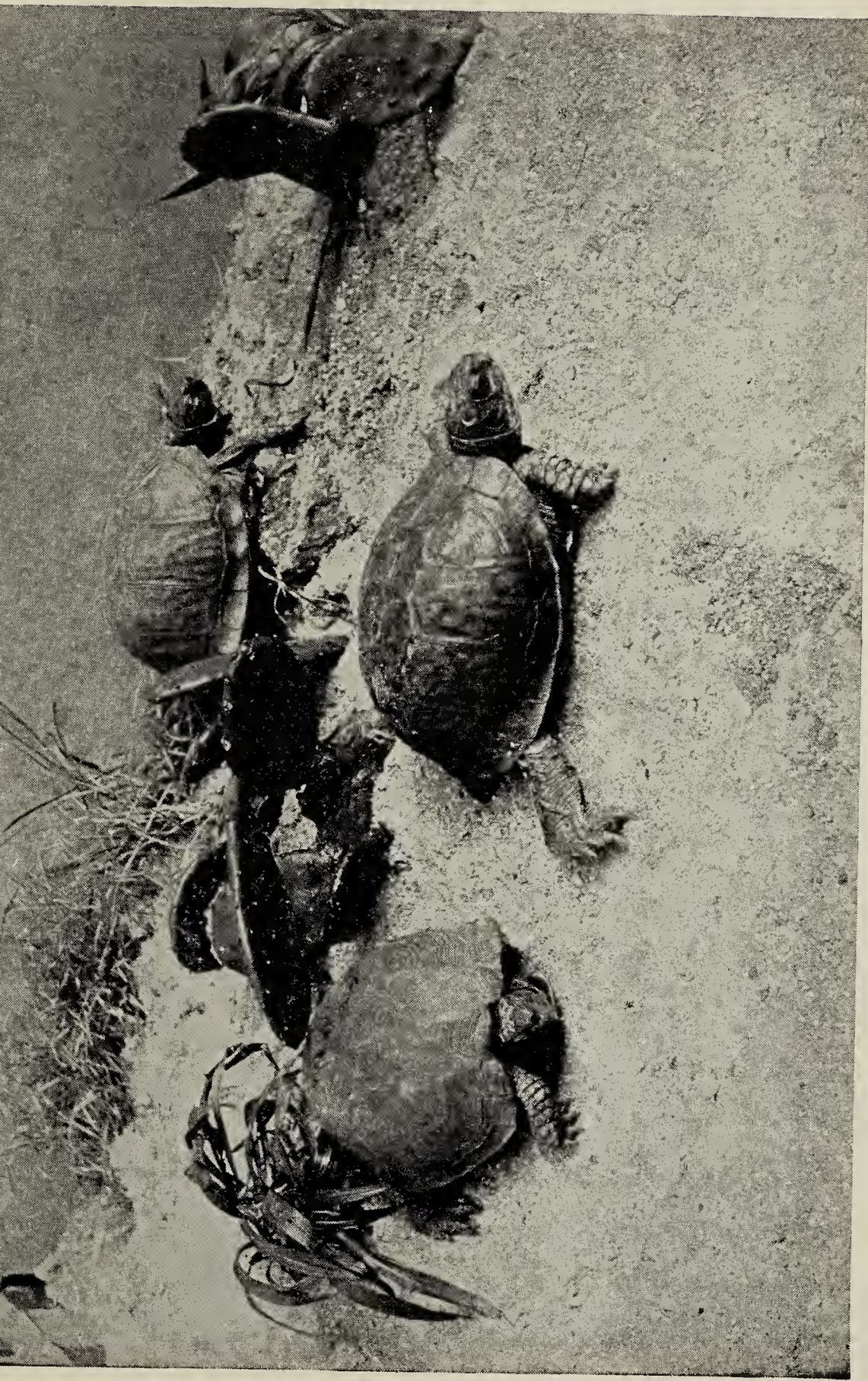
© N. Y. Zoological Society.

*A bit of branch for them to sit on.*









*Tortoises are best as garden pets.*

© N. Y. Zoological Society.



















DATE DUE SLIP

~~DUE~~  
~~EDUC~~ NOV 12 '87

NOV 12 RETURN

~~DUE~~  
~~EDUC~~ NOV 19 '88

~~DUE~~  
~~EDUC~~ NOV 19 RETURN  
~~EDUC~~ NOV 14 '89

~~RE~~ ~~DUE~~  
~~EDUC~~ NOV 28 '89

NOV 28 RETURN

~~RE~~ ~~DUE~~  
~~EDUC~~ NOV 13 '90

NOV 07 RETURN

~~DUE~~  
~~EDUC~~ OCT 07 '91

OCT 07 1991 RETURN

~~RE~~ ~~DUE~~  
~~EDUC~~ DEC 07 '93

1993 NOV 29 RETURN

~~RE~~

~~1111~~



190712

190712

SF  
413  
B57

R

EDUCATION LIBRARY

CURRICULUM

SF 413 B57 c.1

Bianco, Margery (Williams)

All about pets,

EDUC



0 0004 4757 334

**A7843**